

THE JOURNAL

Friday, December 30, 2005

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Citizens stand ground on waterfront

While most work to thwart development efforts along Albany's waterfront, one coalition has other ideas

By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

When members of Citizens for the Albany Shoreline asked residents to attend a public presentation about a potential development at Golden Gate Fields, Brian Parker expected no more than 50 people to show up.

Instead, about double that number attended the Dec. 1 waterfront committee meeting. Most of them signed in as opponents of a retail and housing development on parking lots on the northwest side of the racetrack. "We had a zero flake rate," said Parker, the shoreline group's treasurer who ran unsuccessfully for City Council last year based primarily on his opposition to waterfront development. "If people didn't come, somebody else brought a neighbor."

Parker is part of a coalition of groups fighting the potential Golden Gate Fields development and what they say is undue influence in Albany by Southern California-based developer Rick Caruso.

The groups, which include the Citizens for the Albany Shoreline and Citizens for East Shore Parks, date back 20 years, and have persisted even as potential development and card room plans at the waterfront have come and gone.

Not everyone sides with the groups. Howard McNenny heads the Albany Waterfront Coalition, a 2-year-old group created partly in response to the shoreline groups' plans for the waterfront.

"I think it got started because of the frustration on the part of a lot of us involved in the waterfront for such a long time, and seeing no progress toward getting any improvements on that property," said McNenny, an architect and 34-year Albany resident.

Though his group has not officially endorsed the Caruso plan, McNenny said the plans so far are a "good start" and represent the city's best chance to replace what are now 45 acres of underused parking lots for the 60-year-old track. The development, consisting of two- and four-story buildings, would sit about 200



ROBERT CHEASTY, left, of Citizens for East Shore Parks and Norman La Force of the Sierra Club enjoy the view along the Eastshore State Park in Albany earlier this month. They are two of the leading opponents of efforts to build a commercial development on property currently occupied by Golden Gate Fields.

feet from the water.

While no one favors empty parking lots, environmental groups oppose any additional building on the land while the track still operates. They hope to someday see the racetrack close and the property become a shoreline park.

"The racetrack is a dinosaur use," said Norman La Force, an El Cerrito resident and former mayor in that city who chairs the Sierra Club's East Bay public lands committee. "I like that phrase because it looks like it out there. ... It's a misuse for the land. It would be great as a park."

The opposition to waterfront development, La Force said, can be traced back to the founding in 1961 of Save the Bay, a group headed by Berkeley resident Sylvia MacLaughlin. In the 1960s, the group fought battle after battle to preserve the Bay and its shoreline.

In 1985, various environmental groups, including Save the Bay, the Sierra Club and the

Audubon Society, formed Citizens for East Shore Parks, a non-profit organization with a board of directors that acts in those groups' interests.

Headed by attorney and former Albany Mayor Robert Cheasty, the organization helped secure the Eastshore State Park — 8½ miles and 2,000 acres of parkland running along the shores of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany and Richmond. The group hopes someday to link the park with the Golden Gate Fields property.

The East Shore Parks group also helped pass waterfront protection measures in three cities, including 1990's Measure C in Albany.

McNenny said nervous citizens overwhelmingly passed Measure C as a response to five development plans put forward in the mid-1980s by Catellus Development Corp., the real estate arm of Santa Fe Pacific, the original



SEVERAL RESIDENTS who attended an Albany waterfront committee meeting earlier this month opposed the Caruso Affiliated plan for a residential and retail development at Golden Gate Fields.

owner of the racetrack property. Catellus later sold the property to Ladbrooke Racing California Inc.

One of the alternatives proposed 4.2 million square feet of

development, more than quadruple the size of the largest estimate for Caruso's current plan.

See WATERFRONT, Page A8

Patrons must pick up mail or lose it

By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

Customers of Albany Mail Service and More have until Tuesday to retrieve mail from the Albany Post Office that they were unable to pick up when the business abruptly closed Dec. 16. After that, mail will be returned to sender.

A new owner plans to reopen the business at 1060 Solano Ave. at the beginning of the year.

Wayne Black, the building owner, said he didn't know the business had closed until he began receiving calls from customers. His phone number had been posted on the door.

"The fact is," Black said, "(the owner) did abruptly close the business down a few days before Christmas without giving customers warning, which made a lot of people pretty mad."

One of the customers is Rick Clayton, a Richmond resident who said he's owed a \$45 deposit. He also says he believes he has lost some mail.

Officials from the Postal Service retrieved the remaining mail from the business a few days after it closed, Black said.

A flier posted on the front door advises people to pick up their mail at the Albany Post Office after 1 p.m.

Debra Davis, the former owner of the business, apologized for the inconvenience. She said 50 customers had their mail delivered to the store.

"Unless you have 200 boxes filled, the mailbox place does not support itself," said Davis, a Hayward resident who also runs a home-computing business, TechnoMama. "And there was not that many mailboxes filled."

Davis also disputed Clayton's loss and claimed that Black knew she was leaving.

Monique Henderson, an Oakland resident who runs a legal courier business, said she was asked by Black to take over the business.

She said this week she has been giving the location new paint and carpeting, and plans to offer customers the opportunity to keep track of their mail online.

"We will offer a couple more amenities, and will try to make it profitable," Henderson said.

A mailbox business has been at that location for 25 years, said Davis. She began running the business 18 months ago after the previous owner upset clients by closing abruptly, she said.

See MAIL, Page A5

GETTING YOUR MAIL

Customers of the former Albany Mail Service and More can pick up their mail at the Albany Post Office, 1191 Solano Ave., after 1 p.m. Mail not picked up as of Tuesday will be returned to sender. Customers should call Chuck Nguyen at 510-649-3131 for more information.

Air quality district reaches settlement with Pacific Steel

Company must install carbon filtration device at Plant 3, pay fines, develop odor-management plan

By Alan Lopez
STAFF WRITER

Pacific Steel Casting of Berkeley has reached a settlement with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District over odorous emissions that have long been a source of complaint among nearby residents.

As part of the settlement, Pacific Steel will be required to install a \$2 million carbon filtration system on one of its three plants. In addition, the company will pay \$17,500 in fines and develop an odor-management plan

approved by the air district for the entire facility.

"They're settling notices of violation that were written in the year 2005," said Bruce Paltenghi, an attorney for Pacific Steel. "Those have gotten resolved. The other part of the settlement agreement is an effort to prevent further violation notices or to prevent odors in the community."

Pacific Steel Casting, a steel plant located on Second Street in West Berkeley, accrued nine notices of violations for odorous emissions, opacity and permit violations this year.

Under the agreement reached last week, the company will need to install a carbon-abatement system to reduce odorous emissions from Plant 3 by Oct. 15. Until then, it will pay a penalty of

\$3,000 for any day that the air district confirms five odor complaints. Pacific Steel announced this year its intention to install the filter on Plant 3.

Longtime West Berkeley resident Janice Schroeder called the \$17,500 in fines a "drop in the bucket" for Pacific Steel, which employs between 500 and 600 unionized workers.

She also expressed disappointment over the requirement of five odor complaints for penalties, which she said is difficult because it requires a confirmation from an inspector who may not be readily available.

Because of the weather, the smell may be gone by the time an inspector arrives, she said.

"So it's very difficult to get a confirmed complaint," said

Schroeder, a member of the West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs, a group lobbying for cleaner emissions from Pacific Steel. "To get five within a 24-hour period of time is very hard."

Schroeder was more upbeat about other aspects of the settlement, such as the prohibition of cooling castings and hot molds and materials from being stored outside; the closure of Plant 2 and Plant 3 external doors, except for people entering and exiting; and the closure of doors located between the cooling and cleaning rooms during high-wind conditions.

Those requirements are part of an odor-management plan Pacific Steel will be required to submit by March 31.

According to the settlement, the plan will include require-

ments for operation, inspection and repair of systems to capture and control odorous emissions. It also will assure that employees receive regular training, according to the air district.

A community meeting with air district and Pacific Steel officials will be held to discuss the settlement Jan. 31 at the West Berkeley Senior Center.

"I'm hopeful that we'll see that this does make a change, but I think we will have to continue to monitor the industry to make sure the equipment they have is installed properly," Schroeder said. "And I do encourage them to use less toxic chemicals."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or e-mail alopez1@cetimes.com.

INSIDE

At the Library

Libraries still have work to do in explaining their roles to the public. Page A2



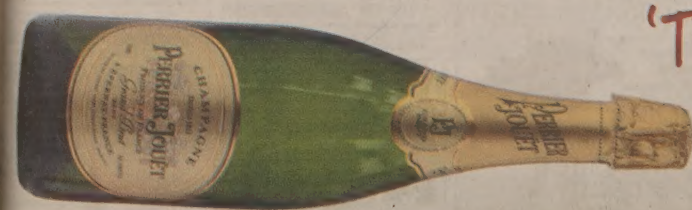
Martin Snapp

Baseball exhibit at the Oakland Museum is well worth the price of admission. Page A3

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INFORMATION FOR LIFE



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NEWS BRIEFS

Albany

Sandbags available for pickup

Sandbags are available at Ocean View Park off Buchanan Street. There will be bags, sand and shovels, though the city recommends that residents bring their own shovels, in case they're being used. For more information, call 510-524-9543.

— Alan Lopez

Kids College classes set to begin

Kids College enrichment classes are starting up again in January. Classes include cartooning, knitting, chess, calligraphy and mixed media art.

Registration begins at 7:45 a.m. on Jan. 3. Classes begin Jan. 17.

The middle school sent home a class catalog and registration forms before winter break. Extras are available at the school office, 1259 Brighton Ave., Albany.

— Shirley Dang

El Cerrito

Residents to see increase in garbage bills

Most El Cerrito residents and business owners will see a \$2.13 increase in their garbage bills starting Jan. 1, following new rates approved recently by the City Council.

The monthly cost for garbage service for residents who use 35-gallon carts will increase from \$23.09 to \$25.22. Eighty percent of residents and small business owners use a 35-gallon cart, said Heather Abrams, the city's integrated waste services manager.

For larger commercial customers using bins, typical service will increase from \$147.57 to \$156.05 a month, according to the city.

Residents can save money by switching to a 20-gallon cart, which after the rate increases will cost \$16.27 a month. For more information, call 510-215-4350.

— Alan Lopez

Fund set up for late reporter's children

A memorial fund has been established for the children of Piedmont reporter Con Garretson, who died Nov. 23.

Garretson, 35, died in his sleep at his El Cerrito home. He joined the Piedmont in August.

He is survived by his wife, Tammy; two daughters, Madyn, 5½, and Sydney, 22 months; and mother, Maureen Garretson, all of El Cerrito.

The fund is at the El Cerrito Plaza branch of Wells Fargo Bank, 9800 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530, 510-524-3610. Donations may be made to the attention of: Cornelius Garretson Memorial Fund.

— Jon Kawamoto

ALBANY POLICE REPORTS

Wednesday, Dec. 21

■ **ACURA STOLEN** — A 1988 Acura Legend was taken from the 500 block of Pierce Street, according to a report made to police at 11:42 p.m.

■ **JEEP STOLEN** — At 2:02 p.m., a caller reported that a green 1992 Jeep Cherokee was taken from the 700 block of Jackson Street.

■ **HONDA STOLEN** — A blue 1991 Honda Accord was taken from the 800 block of Jackson Street, according to a report made at 7:28 a.m.

■ **COROLLA STOLEN** — It was reported at 7:52 a.m. that a 1993 Toyota Corolla was taken from the 900 block of Hillside Avenue.

Thursday, Dec. 22

■ **CREDIT CARD FRAUD** — A resident on the 1100 block of Brighton Avenue reported at 4:40 p.m. that fraudulent charges had been made on a credit card.

■ **STOLEN PURSE** — At 8:13 a.m., a resident reported that a purse had been taken from a gray Chevrolet van on the 1200 block of Solano Avenue.

■ **BROKEN WINDOW** — It was reported at 9:04 a.m. that a window had been broken on the Masonic Avenue side of the Albany community center.

■ **DUI ARREST** — At 2:20 a.m., police arrested the driver of a 1965 Chevrolet at Interstate 80 and Buchanan Street on suspicion of driving under the influence.

Friday, Dec. 23

■ **DUI ARREST** — A Hayward resident with an arrest warrant for driving under the influence was arrested at 8:48 p.m. at San Pablo Avenue and Washington Avenue.

■ **AUTO BURGLARY** — At 11:30 a.m., a caller reported to police that the window of a blue BMW had been broken on the 500 block of Pierce Street.

■ **DUI ARREST** — At 2:17 a.m., police arrested the driver of a 2001 Mitsubishi on the 1000 block of San

Pablo Avenue on suspicion of driving under the influence.

Saturday, Dec. 24

■ **DISORDERLY CONDUCT** — At 8:44 p.m., a caller reported that five to six juveniles, about 13 years of age or younger, were running around Terrace Park and making a lot of noise.

Sunday, Dec. 25

■ **MEAL THEFT** — At 10:26 p.m., it was reported that a man had left a restaurant on the 1000 block of San Pablo Avenue without paying.

■ **BIKE STOLEN** — At 1:47 p.m., a caller reported that a bike had been stolen in front of a liquor store on the 800 block of San Pablo Avenue while the bike's owner was inside.

Monday, Dec. 26

■ **DOG CORPSE** — Police called animal control officials after it was reported at 2:02 p.m. that a dead dog was found hidden among rocks at the Albany beach.

■ **AUTO BURGLARY** — At 12:36 p.m., it was reported that a 1997 Toyota Corolla had been burglarized on Solano Avenue.

Tuesday, Dec. 27

■ **CAMRY STOLEN** — It was reported at 3:13 p.m. that a 1990 Toyota Camry was taken from an apartment complex carport on the 400 block of Stannage Avenue overnight.

■ **THEFT ARREST** — At 5:25 p.m., police arrested a 21-year-old female employee at Target on suspicion of possessing stolen property. The Oakland woman allowed her friends to make purchases with stolen credit cards, police allege.

■ **AUTO BURGLARY** — It was reported at 11:52 a.m. that a bag of clothes and a car stereo were taken from a 1992 Toyota Corolla on the 900 block of Ventura Avenue. In addition, a window was smashed.

— Alan Lopez

Libraries struggle with public's misconceptions

"Libraries are a legacy to each generation, offering the heritage of the past and the promise of the future."

— The Whole Library Handbook 3, compiled by George M. Eberhart



JULIE WINKELSTEIN
At the Library

AT A RECENT MEETING, one of the attendees apologetically mentioned to me that she doesn't have a library card from my library. She does have a card from another library system, she assured me — assuming, I guess, that all librarians think everyone should have library cards.

Later I realized her tone was the same one we use when we assure people that, yes, we do eat green leafy vegetables or, yes, we do exercise several times a week. There was a kind of defensive yet conciliatory tone that I've heard (and used) many times.

The more I thought about this, the more I realized this feeling that libraries are "good" for you, that going to one is somehow a superior yet burdensome way of being, may be one of the reasons libraries continue to struggle. Somehow we

have become linked to that part of life that, while necessary, isn't really that much fun. We are like daily vitamins and low-fat diets — essential sometimes but not particularly enjoyed.

Now, I know this isn't true for many of the people who pass through our doors every day. The children, in particular, are oblivious to any kind of subtle messages they may have received about reading and libraries.

It is joy I see when a child pulls a large, brightly colored book from the shelf and plops down — right there — on the floor and starts to turn pages. It is excitement I hear in that high-pitched voice, when the words "Can you read this book to me?" come out quickly and loudly, and a parent starts to

read in a library-muted and enthusiastic tone.

And certainly there is no reluctance on the part of the crowd of people in the lobby every day, waiting for our doors to open. Some of these people come to use our fast Internet connection, while others are there to read the newspaper or request a new book or use the study room or pick up a library hold or peruse the DVDs.

These people understand and appreciate how a library meets an immediate need, and I doubt any of them are feeling smug because they have taken a daily dose of library.

However, the people who don't use the library often — or ever — may somehow have gotten the impression there is an arduous virtue in using a library. They have yet to realize we are chock-full of resources besides a row of classics and an encyclopedia.

A few weeks ago, a young man confessed to me that he had never used a library for researching a paper. All of his information had been gathered through his expert online searching techniques. What

could I say to this? I did not want to tell him that a free public library card would give him access to a line newspaper and magazine articles that might otherwise have a fee, and he was not pressed — he had some experience with reaching the information search, only to find the information actually read the article out paying for it.

Then, to my astonishment, he wanted to know whether he could just ask a question and have a librarian help him find the answer. Well, yes, I told him; in fact, that's one of our specialties — figuring out information someone wants and helping to get it. It is something we do on a large and small scale every day.

What I didn't tell him was the lesson I learned from this question. If, in all the details about the relevance of information, the simple fact that we have questions has somehow been forgotten, we have some work to do.

Reach librarian Julie Winkelstein at jwinkelstein@ccclib.org or at the Albany Library, 510-526-3720. Ext. 111.

LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Albany Library

1247 Marin Ave.
510-526-3720
ccclib.org

Hours: Monday, noon to 6 p.m.; Tuesday, noon to 8 p.m.; Wednesday, noon to 8 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, closed; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ John Oliver Simon will be the featured poet on Thursday, Jan. 5, from 7 to 9 p.m. Simon's books of poetry include *Roads to Dawn Lake* (Oyez, 1968), *Rattlesnake Grass* (Hanging Loose, 1976). Neither of us can break the Other's Hold (Shameless Hussy, 1982), *Lord of the House of Dawn* (Bombshelter, 1991), *Son Caminos* (poems in Spanish, Hotel Ambrosiano, Mexico City, 1997) and *Caminante* (Creative Arts, 2001). Almost 300 of his translations of contemporary Latin American poets have been published in journals and anthologies in the United States. He is a former director of California Poets in the Schools and a contributing editor to *Poetry Flash* and *Temple*. The free event will be in the Edith Stone room. Cookies will be served. For more information, call Julie Winkelstein at Ext. 17.

■ Alison Seevak will lead a drop-in poetry-writing workshop on Wednesday, Jan. 11 from 7-9 p.m. Seevak is an Albany poet and teacher who has taught writing to children and adults at schools and community arts centers throughout the Bay Area. For more information, call Julie Winkelstein at Ext. 17.

■ Weekly singalongs are held Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. by Dale Allen Boland, who has been sharing community music-making with the

East Bay for more than 15 years. The singalongs are free and for all ages. No registration is required. For more information, contact Julie Winkelstein at Ext. 17.

■ Drop-in knitting groups for all ages are held Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. Work on your own project or make pet blankets and children's hats for victims of recent disasters. Instructions, yarn and needles are provided for library projects. No registration is necessary for this free activity. For more information, contact Julie Winkelstein at Ext. 17.

El Cerrito Library

6510 Stockton Ave.
510-526-7512
ccclib.org

Hours: Monday and Tuesday, noon to 8 p.m.; Wednesday, closed; Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ The winter series of lapset storytimes (formerly known as Babytime and Toddlerime) will begin on Jan. 12 and continue through Feb. 16. These storytimes, which meet on Thursdays at 10:15 and 11 a.m., are for babies and toddlers up to age 3 and their caregivers. Each meeting lasts about 20 minutes, and includes songs, bounces, games and fingerplays in addition to the stories. No registration is required.

■ Children ages 3 and up and their families are invited Saturday, Jan. 28, at 11 a.m. for a Chinese New Year program presented by storyteller Clara Yen to celebrate the beginning of the Year of the Dog. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the El Cerrito Library.

■ Children in grades 1-6 are invited to read books and earn prizes by participating in the library's "I Love to Read" club this winter. To participate in the club, which is sponsored by the Friends of the El Cerrito Library, each child needs to pick up a reading record at the library, and use it to list 10 books he or she reads between Dec. 1 and Feb. 28. The reading records are then to be returned to the library any time during February for display on the library's bulletin board. Each finisher will receive a paperback book, a bookmark and two Hershey's Kisses.

■ Children ages 3 and up and their families are invited to a series of four Monday evening family storytimes beginning Monday, Jan. 23 and continuing through Monday, Feb. 13. Each of the meetings, which will include songs and fingerplays as well as stories, will begin at 7 p.m. and last about a half hour. The themes for the four story times will be "Yummers! Stories about Food" on Jan. 23, "Dress Up Time" on Jan. 30, "Wild Bears!" on Feb. 6 and "Valentine's Day Stories" on Feb. 13.

Kensington Library

61 Arlington Ave.
510-524-3043
ccclib.org

Hours: Monday and Tuesday, noon to 8 p.m.; Wednesday, closed; Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Dr. Marshall Zaslove will talk about the benefits of meditation from a medical perspective on Monday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. A brief meditation sitting will follow the presentation. The event is free.

■ The library will host a free five-part

reading and discussion series on "Let's Talk About It: Jewish Literatures — Identity and Imagination." The series explores Jewish literary and culture through scholarly discussions of contemporary and classic books on the theme of "Between Worlds: Stories of Estrangement and Homecoming." Led by Dr. Howard Hoffman of the Graduate Theological Union, the first book discussion will be on "Lost in Translation" by David Hoffman on Saturday, Jan. 14, at 8 p.m. The event is free.

■ Variety performer Daffy Davis will present an evening of music, comedy and juggling on Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 6:30 p.m. Because of the popularity of this show, a limited number of tickets will be issued. Tickets will be available starting Monday, Jan. 10. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Kensington Library.

■ The next meeting of the library's new book club will be held Monday, Jan. 23, at 7 p.m. It will discuss William Saroyan's novel, "The Human Comedy." The novel takes place in San Joaquin Valley during World War II and reflects a family's struggles and dreams of America's second-generation immigrants. Book group meetings are held on the fourth Monday of every month at the library at 7 p.m. and are sponsored by the Friends of the Kensington Library.

■ Family storytimes are held on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. All ages are welcome.

— Craig Lazeretti

Library activity items may be mailed to jwinkelstein@ccclib.org. Items should be received at least one week before publication.

EL CERRITO POLICE REPORTS

Monday, Dec. 19

■ **AUTO BURGLARY** — A cell phone and tools were taken from a vehicle on the 1300 block of Gayle Court sometime between 9 p.m. on Dec. 19 and 9 a.m. the next day.

■ **CAMRY STOLEN** — A 1989 Toyota Camry was taken from the 900 block of Kearney Street between 9 p.m. on Dec. 19 and 9 a.m. the next day.

Wednesday, Dec. 21

■ **ROBBERY** — An iPod and cash were taken from a victim as he walked on the Ohlone Greenway at Lincoln Avenue at 8 p.m. Three men approached him from behind, assaulted him and robbed him, police said. The robbers were then scared off by a neighbor.

■ **BURGLARY** — Power and hand tools worth more than \$5,000 were taken from a basement on the 3100 block of Yosemite Street sometime between 8 p.m. on Dec. 21 and noon

on Dec. 22. The lock of the basement door had been broken.

■ **CAMRY STOLEN** — A 1987 Toyota Camry was taken from the 500 block of Lexington Avenue sometime between 9 p.m. on Dec. 21 and 7:30 a.m. the next day.

Thursday, Dec. 22

■ **HONDA STOLEN** — A 2001 Honda CRV was taken from the 5400 block of Hillside Avenue between 6 p.m. on Dec. 22 and 6 a.m. the next day.

Sunday, Dec. 25

■ **HONDA STOLEN** — A 1985 Honda Prelude was taken from the 1500 block of South 56th Street sometime between 3 p.m. on Dec. 25 and 12:30 a.m. the next morning.

■ **CIVIC STOLEN** — A 1992 Honda Civic was taken from the 700 block of Colusa Avenue and was driven down the block. It was abandoned there in favor of another Honda, police said. The

incident took place between 7 p.m. on Dec. 25 and 1 a.m. the next morning.

■ **HONDA STOLEN** — A 1991 Honda Prelude was taken from the 100 block of Pomona Avenue sometime between 7 p.m. on Dec. 25 and 1 a.m. the next morning.

Monday, Dec. 26

■ **HONDA RECOVERED** — A 1995 Honda Civic stolen from the 700 block

of Colusa Avenue was recovered about 10 minutes later at Walnut Avenue and Norvell Street at 12:11 a.m.

■ **HONDA STOLEN** — A 1992 Honda Civic was taken from the 800 block of Norvell Street at 12:11 a.m.

■ **VOYAGER STOLEN** — A 1997 Plymouth Voyager was taken from the block of Norvell Street between 8 p.m. on Dec. 26 and 2 a.m. the next morning.

THE JOURNAL

4301 Lakeside Drive, Richmond, CA 94806 • 510-262-2724

Craig Lazeretti, Hills editor

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EDITORIAL

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Neighbors

Baseball exhibit fun for fans of all walks

DID YOU KNOW that Shoeless Joe Jackson actually wore shoes? I know because I've seen them. Also, Hilda Chester's cowbell and Eddie Gaedel's jersey. For those few who aren't devotees of the Church of Baseball, let me identify these holy artifacts.

Hilda Chester was a rabid Brooklyn Dodger fan who sat in the bleachers in Ebbets Field, urging her heroes on by ringing an enormous cowbell.

And Eddie Gaedel was the 3-foot-7 pinch hitter for the St. Louis Browns who had only one major league at-bat. He was sent to the plate with instructions not to swing at the ball, no matter what. He walked on four straight pitches — all high. (His uniform number, incidentally, was 1/2.)

They — and a thousand other totally cool artifacts — are currently at the Oakland Museum in a traveling exhibit from the Baseball Hall of Fame.

It's been at the museum since September, and I apologize for telling you about it so late in the game. But it'll still be there until Jan. 22, so I figure better late than never.

The first thing you see when you walk through the front door is a regulation home plate and batter's boxes on the ground. Look down the hall, and there, 60 feet 6 inches away, is a life-size cutout of Vida Blue winding up to throw you his best heater.

After that, it's a feat of delectables — the bat Bobby Thomson used to hit "The Shot Heard 'Round the World" in 1951, Babe Ruth's bat from 1928 (with a notch for each homer, carved by the Bambino himself), uniforms from the Chicago Cubs and the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, George Brett's "pine bar" bat, Harry Carey's eyeglasses, a handmade ball made by Babe Ruth when he was a child in reform school, and even the original San Diego Chicken costume!

There's a bat made from a tree limb, made by American diplomats and reporters interned in Nazi Germany in 1942.

And there's another bat made from a tree limb, made by Japanese-American citizens interned at the Gila River Relocation Camp that same year.

Meanwhile, loudspeakers play Abbott & Costello's "Who's on First," Russ Hodges' "The Giants win the pennant!" call from 1951, and a vintage recording of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" in Yiddish.



MARTIN SNAPP
Snapp Shots

IF YOU GO:

■ **WHAT:** "Baseball as America"
■ **WHERE:** Oakland Museum of California, 10th and Oak streets, Oakland

■ **WHEN:** Through Jan. 22, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. first Friday of the month; 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturdays, noon-6 p.m. Sundays.

■ **HOW MUCH:** \$5-\$8; timed tickets available

■ **CONTACT:** 510-238-2200, www.museumca.org

dish!

Sometimes the exhibits just make you shake your head and ask, "What were they thinking?"

For instance, a photo of Joe DiMaggio and Joe Louis from a 1939 issue of Life Magazine. DiMaggio looks like he always did — impeccably tailored suit, perfect Windsor knot, every hair in place. And Louis looks like the same. The caption reads, "Like heavyweight champion Louis, DiMaggio is lazy, shy and inarticulate."

Or this quote from Charles W. Elliott, president of Harvard, circa 1900: "I understand that a curve ball is thrown with a deliberate attempt to deceive. Surely that is not an ability we should want to foster at Harvard."

And, of course, the hate mail that poured in on Henry Aaron when he broke Babe Ruth's career home run record in 1974. ("You dirty old n— man, We wish you all bad luck. P.S. Playing ball is better than picking cotton and eating grits.")

On the other hand, at the about the same time another white man, Jeffrey Young, wrote Aaron about the newest member of the Young family:

"My son's name is Aaron Henry Young. He is named in honor of my late father, who I dearly loved, and my favorite baseball player, who I deeply admire. Both my dad and you taught me that people are not measured by where they are from or how they look, but by

FACES & PLACES

Programs for kids kick off new year

Kids will be a major focus as regional parks start their programs in the new year.

At Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley, the Kids Garden club will hold its first 2006 session from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 7. The other sessions will be at the same time on Jan. 21 and Feb. 11.

The club is designed for youngsters ages 7 to 12, who plant, harvest, build, make crafts and cook, all with the help of staff naturalists. Registration is required, and there's a fee of \$6 per session (\$8 for nondistrict residents).

For the younger set, there's Tilden Tots, an outdoor nature adventure program for 3- and 4-year-olds, each accompanied by an adult. Sessions are from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 10, Jan. 12, Feb.



AMY GITELMAN

EL CERRITO resident Amy Gitelman's art exhibit, "California Landscapes," is on display through Feb. 24 at Bank of America, 10422 San Pablo Ave. in El Cerrito. The bank is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Pictured is a painting of Big Sur.

9 and Feb. 15, all led by naturalist Linda Yemoto. Registration is required, and there's a fee of \$6 per session (\$8 for nonresidents). Down at Crab Cove Visitor

Center at Crown Beach in Alameda, the Sea Siblings program is designed for 3- to 5-year-olds, who can bring a 1- to 5-year-old companion. Each session includes an outdoor expedition, then a related craft. Sessions last from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 3, Jan. 17 and Feb. 7. Registration is required, and there's a fee of \$4 per child per session.

Another Crab Cove program, Sea Squirts, is designed for 3- to 5-year-olds accompanied by an adult. It runs from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 10, Jan. 17, Feb. 14 and Feb. 28. The content is similar to Sea Siblings. Registration is required, and there's a fee of \$6 per session (\$8 for nonresidents).

To register or obtain more information on any of the Tilden and Crab Cove programs just described, phone the Park District Reservations Department at 510-636-1684. You can enroll for any individual session or for all of them.

— Ned MacKay

GARDEN CLUB MEETS: The El Cerrito Garden Club will start off 2006 with its regular meeting on Thursday, Jan. 12, at 9:30 a.m. in the El Cerrito Community Center at 7007 Mooser Lane. A program on local conservation

will be presented by Jonna Paefthimou, conservation manager of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club. Guests are welcome. The cost is \$3, and refreshments will be served. For more information, call 510-526-2976.

— Craig Lazzeretti

DEMOCRATIC CLUB MEETING: The next meeting of the El Cerrito Democratic Club will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 24 at the Northminster Presbyterian Church, 545 Ashbury Ave. The club will elect new officers and discuss activities in the new year. For more information, call 510-527-9146.

ONE-MAN SHOW: Brian Wetzel will perform his autobiographical one-man show "Side by Side — a Journey with Depression" at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Jan. 20 and Jan. 21, at the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. in Kensington.

The show is about Wetzel's struggle with depression and drug addiction. General admission is \$15. There's a suggested donation of \$10 for mental health workers and consumers. To reserve a seat, call 510-526-9146.

— Alan Lopez

Consider mental fitness a good resolution

Q. THE THOUGHT of another year so soon after the beginning of this one is positively scary! Is there any reasonable way to deal with this unbelievably fast passage of time?

A. Yes, here it is, yet another new year! You are so right about how quickly they pass these days. This means that it is already resolution time! How will you change your life? What would make your life better? Consider your mental fitness situation. Are you using your mind as much as you should be?

Go for progress! Accept as many challenges as you can. Push yourself to become as mentally active as you have ever been. How many new kinds of puzzles and problems can you discover? Check out your newspapers and your local bookstore. There are so many kinds available. Make a resolution to give it a determined try.

Almost everyone has a hidden project that they have considered taking on for a long while, but somehow the perfect time to begin it never seems to come. Maybe you have wanted to learn another language, take a challenging new class, or start a new hobby — the list is endless.

Perhaps you have considered being a volunteer in a program that has attracted you, and in which you might be helpful. Make a resolution that this is the year to begin that new project.

Take that final leap into the activity. Make that change in your life at long last. What an



CONNIE LYNCH
Don't Lose Your Mind

impressive start for 2006!

If you have an ongoing problem, the new year is a time to make another positive change in your life. Every year I make my perennial resolution to try to control my anger when I encounter the poor and dangerous driving situations in which we all have become involved. Often a short errand in your car becomes a truly frightening experience. The best reaction for me is to be the most defensive driver possible. Be prepared to stop, move out of traffic, or whatever it takes to avoid an accident.

It is true that my temper still flares on occasion when another driver performs some particularly stupid and/or dangerous action. But I think that I am at least a bit better controlled.

Another important resolution is to become more physically active, unless, of course, you are already operating at the top level of your capability. If you have any physical problems and you are considering starting any new physical activity, be sure to check with your physician to make certain that it is suitable for you. If you should decide to

join an exercise program, a trainer or other adviser is likely to be available to give you an appropriate start and an idea of the best way to continue.

An energetic athletic program can be very stress-reducing. Well worth a resolution.

Mental and physical fitness are both so important to us as we "get on" in years. We so need to stay as fit as possible so that we can continue the ways of life that we truly enjoy. What better time to put everything in order? Make your appropriate resolutions and have a happy 2006!

E-mail inquiries for Kensington resident Connie Lynch to conniewl@aol.com. Lynch, Ph.D., is the founder of Mind Works, a mental fitness program designed for older adults, and is the author of "Don't Lose Your Mind, Four Components of Superior Mental Fitness." For information on books and classes, call 510-466-5833.

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PET OF THE WEEK

BERKELEY — The following animals may be available for adoption at the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society.

Cats: 7-month-old Domestic Short Hair (DSH) black; 10-year-old female Domestic Long Hair (DLH) blue; 1-year-old female Domestic Medium Hair (DMH) brown tabby; 5-year-old female DLH gray; 9-month-old male DLH brown tabby; 1-year-old female DSH white; 20-week-old female DSH Dilute Tortoiseshell; 9-week-old male DSH gray; 7-year-old male DSH white & tabby; 10-year-old female DLH tortoiseshell; 1-year-old female DLH orange & white; 6-year-old male DSH white with black; 5-month-old female DSH black & white; 4-year-old male DSH pale gray with white; other cats and kittens of various ages, sizes and colors.

Dogs: 1-year-old male black Labrador Retriever mix; 4-year-old male black & white Jack Russell Terrier mix; 1-year-old blue merle & tan Queensland Heeler mix; 4-month-old female black and white Pit mix; 11-month-old male red speckled Cattle dog mix; 1-year-old male white & brown Shepherd mix; 5-month-old male white with brown & black Hound mix; 1-year-old male Ivory/Yellow Lab mix; 7-year-old male red Pomeranian Mix; more dogs rescued from Hurricane Katrina in need of homes.

Adoption fee: dogs \$125; cats \$100; rabbits \$40 — including spaying, neutering and age-appropriate shots. There is an overnight hold period. The Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society is located at 2700 Ninth St., Berkeley. Its hours are 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Information: www.berkeley-humane.org or call 510-845-7735.



BERKELEY-EAST BAY HUMANE SOCIETY

HUMPHREY is a 1- to 2-year-old male black and tan Hound mix, and may be available for adoption from the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society. He was rescued from Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. He needs a quiet, mellow home while he continues to recover from heartworm. For more information on Humphrey or other animals available for adoption, call or visit the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society.

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HILLS EDITOR • CRAIG LAZZERETTI

ALBANY

EL CERRITO

KENSINGTON

THE JOURNAL

"... were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

— Thomas Jefferson

Request to readers:
Tell us what you think

WE SPEND PLENTY of time telling you what we think of various issues in the community. Now we want to hear what you think of the job we're doing covering them.

As part of our effort to better serve our readers in 2006, we want you to share your thoughts with us about the content of this newspaper. Of course, we'd love to hear about the things we're doing well, but we're primarily interested in finding out the areas where you think we could do better.

Here's some of things we'd like to know:

1. Which issues most concern you? Is it affordable housing, traffic concerns, environmental causes, schools, crime, retail and residential developments, city finances, local taxes, community events? How do you think we currently do in covering these issues fairly and objectively? Would you like us to write more stories on some of these issues, or would you like for us to simply approach them in different ways? Are there emerging trends that we're failing to notice or address properly?

2. How good a job do we do letting you know about important events in the community? Would you like to see more or less space devoted to calendar listings (because of space constraints, we've had to move those to the C section the past two weeks)? Do you have an easy or hard time finding out about the activities and community resources that most interest you? Would you like to see certain events highlighted each week?

3. Do we devote enough space to profiling interesting and intriguing personalities and places in the community? Would you like to read more stories about unique businesses and organizations that are leaving a stamp on your city?

FROM THE EDITOR

4. What do you think of our editorial page? Do our editorials address the issues that most concern you? Are there certain topics we should be talking about more? Do you agree with the positions we are taking? Do we fairly represent both sides of the debate when staking out our position? Would you like to see more or fewer guest commentaries from people in the community?

Hopefully, this provides some food for thought, but don't feel limited to these areas. If there are other concerns or suggestions you have for us, feel free to let us know. This is your newspaper. While people will undoubtedly have different opinions about what should or should not be covered in these pages, our aim is to serve the interests of as many of you as possible. And the only way to ensure that we do that is to hear what you think.

Of course, our limited resources only take us so far. The more the community can get involved in contributing to the content of these pages, the better the final product will be. That's why we always welcome your submissions of news releases, photos, story tips, letters and commentaries. While we can never guarantee that we'll run all of them, we can guarantee that we will at least give them a close look and consider their news or editorial value.

You can e-mail your comments to me at clazzeretti@cc-times.com or send them snail mail to 4301 Lakeside Drive, Richmond, CA 94806. I look forward to hearing from you and wish you all a Happy New Year. We hope to serve you better than ever in 2006.

— Craig Lazzarotti
Editor

YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Assembly

Loni Hancock: (D-14th District: Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Emeryville, Kensington, Richmond, San Pablo, North and West Oakland) State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249, 916-319-2014. Fax: 916-319-2114; 918 Parker St., Ste. A13, Berkeley, CA 94710, 510-540-3660; Fax: 510-540-3655; 712 El Cerrito Plaza, El Cerrito, CA 94530, 510-559-1406. Fax: 510-559-1478

East Bay Regional Parks

Jean Siri: Ward 1 (Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Kensington, part of Pinole, and San Pablo). E-mail: jsiri@ebparks.org

AC Transit

Joe Wallace: Ward 1 (West Contra Costa and Northern Alameda counties). E-mail: jwallace@actransit.org; phone: 510-891-7143; fax: 510-234-7689.

Steger Sanitary District

Phone 510-524-4668 or see online at www.stegedst.dst.ca.us.

County Supervisors

John Giola: (1st District) 11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D, El Cerrito, CA 94530, 510-374-3231. Fax: 510-374-3429. E-mail: dist1@bos.co.contra-costa.ca.us.

Keith Carson: (5th District) 1221 Oak St., Ste. 536, Oakland, CA 94612, 510-272-6695. Fax: 510-271-5151. E-mail: kcarson@co.alameda.ca.us.

Cities

El Cerrito: City offices, 10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-215-4300. E-mail: citycouncil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Albany: City offices, 1000 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-528-5710.

Kensington: Fire Protection District 217 Arlington Blvd. 510-527-8395
Police Protection and Community Services District 217 Arlington Blvd. 510-526-4141

School boards

West Contra Costa Unified School District: 510-620-2246

Albany Unified School District: 510-558-3766

NUMBERS YOU SHOULD KNOW

City government

ALBANY
City Hall, 1000 San Pablo Ave. 510-528-5710
Mayor Allan Maris

City Council — Meets at 8 p.m. the first and third Mondays at the City Hall Council Chamber.

Community Development — Includes planning, building and maintenance. 510-528-5760

Web site: www.albanyca.org

EL CERRITO

City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Ave. 510-215-4300.
Mayor Janet Abelson

City Council — Meets at 7:30 p.m. the first and third Mondays in the Garden Room of the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Mooser Lane. 510-215-4305.

Public Works — Report problems with city trees and sidewalks, burned-out street lights, potholes and clogged storm drains. 510-215-4382.

Recycling Center — 7501 Schmidt Lane. 510-215-4350.
Web site: www.el-cerrito.org

KENSINGTON

Municipal Advisory Council — Meets at 7:30 p.m. the last Tuesday of each month in the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave. Addresses zoning and land-use issues, and acts in an advisory capacity to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. 510-526-5546.

Police Protection and Community Services District — Meets at 7:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month, except August, at the Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave. Addresses Police

Department, Parks and Recreation and solid waste issues. 510-526-4141.

Fire Protection District — Meets at 7:30 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month at the Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave. 510-527-8395.

Emergency numbers

Albany, El Cerrito or Kensington fire, police or medical: 911.

Non-emergency
Albany fire — 510-528-5770

Albany police — 510-525-7300

El Cerrito and Kensington Fire — 510-215-4450.

El Cerrito Police — 510-237-3233.

Kensington Police — 510-233-1214; business line 510-526-4141.

Sewer problems — Steger Sanitary Service. 510-524-4667.

Water services — East Bay Municipal Utility District. 510-287-1380, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays, or 510-835-3000 after 4:30 p.m.

Libraries

Albany — 1247 Marin Ave. Open noon to 6 p.m. on Mondays; noon to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Closed Fridays and Sundays. 510-526-3720

El Cerrito — 6510 Stockton Ave. Open noon-8 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursdays, 1-5 p.m. Fridays and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays. Closed Wednesdays and Sundays. 510-526-7512

Kensington — 61 Arlington Ave. Open noon-8 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursdays, 1-5 p.m. Fridays and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays. Closed Wednesdays and Sundays. 510-524-3043.

Well, what should I know?



If it starts getting windy, rainy or shaky, run for cover.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enough with the street changes

I live on one of those streets leading to El Cerrito Plaza slated for closure.

Now, I can go down my street and to the Plaza easily, with virtually none of the traffic so feared by the planners.

If you close Stannage, Talbot and Evelyn, I will have to make a left turn and fight my way down Solano Avenue or wait for a red light at Evelyn so I can finally get onto newly "calmed" Marin. Then I will have to inch down San Pablo Avenue to the Plaza — adding another 10 minutes to my trip there and at least another 10 minutes to get home again.

Better the city of Albany should turn its attention to the safety of all those children whose parents drop them off at Cornell School, in the middle of the wrong side of the street, then make U-turns right there, in all that traffic, to head back the way they came.

This situation is a disaster waiting to happen and a much bigger threat to Albany's children than leaving well enough alone with traffic to the Plaza.

Sue Douglass
Albany

Worried about traffic from condo plan

Regarding the proposed condo development at El Cerrito Plaza, I worry that traffic, which is already odd there, will become much worse.

Currently, though the traffic seems to flow and there are no traffic jams, often there are drivers who do not understand and/or ignore the signs and traffic patterns.

It seems that 25 percent of the times that I am at a stop sign (especially at the signs at Pasta Pomodoro or at Longs), someone else breezes right on through, without stopping. Luckily, I know this may happen, so I am overly cautious and drive slowly through these areas.

On one evening, when I was at the Plaza for a quick run to Longs, I saw two cars, each of which went through two stop signs. It is even more dangerous for pedestrians.

Again, I'd say about 25 percent of the times that I am about to cross in a crosswalk, a car drives right through without so much as a glance at me.

What will happen if another 200 cars are added to this mix? And if Albany closes off the access to the side streets, it will be even worse.

It just seems that if the City Council goes forward with this plan, it will be a very irresponsible decision.

Cathy Torney
Kensington

Bush's wiretaps warrant impeachment

I think President Bush's secret wiretap orders are outrageous, and I hope the American people can begin to see this is an impeachable offense.

Does the president think he has the right or imperial power to do this? Our founding fathers were far from perfect in the notion of democracy. For example, women, slaves and indigenous people, among others, did not even have voting or property rights.

However, their notions of enlightenment (Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, in particular) did not envision an imperial presidency. Even George Washington did not want to be king.

Our puppet king could have asked the Federal Intelligence Court, which would not turn down a real national security issue.

This is another wake-up call for citi-

zens of this nation that if we still purport to be a democracy, we must take a stand against growing executive power. Now, with a supine Congress and Supreme Court, this is really a dangerous action.

Of course, Bush can use the fear tactic of saying this is for "national security." Anything can be done in the name of national security.

Hermann Goerring said that at Nuremberg, and the European fascists of the 1920s and '30s instilled fear of any democratic ideas or respecting our Constitution.

Cynthia Johnson
Kensington

Answer on oil drilling in Arctic still no

Recent actions by the U.S. Congress make clear that the answer on oil drilling in the Arctic is NO. But Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska attached the same controversial drilling provisions to the defense bill.

Although I was sad to see a bill that would provide funding for our troops delayed, I supported Sen. Dianne Feinstein in her effort to block any version of the defense bill that would open the Arctic for drilling.

Our last pristine open spaces are national treasures that must be protected, not sacrificed to the short-term interests of local neighboring economies and big oil.

The Republicans of this administration and their friends in Congress can't accept no for an answer. If the defense bill is delayed, it's because they care more about their oil company friends than the well-being of our troops.

Sophie Hahn
Kensington

Wiretaps are illegal without amendment

Bush's wiretaps are illegal. Rights reserved for the people cannot be taken from them without a constitutional amendment. Al-Qaida may kill some of us, but they won't conquer us.

Millions have fought and died for our civil rights. If we let terrorism be a reason to take those rights away, then those sacrifices will have been in vain.

Elizabeth Pun
Albany

Give us a democracy that cares

I cannot believe I have to write this letter. I'm beginning to believe what so many are saying, that Democratic, as well as Republican, members of Congress are in on the takeover of our government.

Why would any of them even consider supporting more money for Iraq without a clear, if not immediate, withdrawal plan?

WRITE TO THE JOURNAL

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries reflect the opinion of the writer and must include the author's first and last name, address and daytime phone number. All letters are subject to verification.

Letters are subject to editing for brevity, grammar and style. Not all letters may be published.

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And then, to go further and consider supporting it with the Arctic drilling attached, is beyond the absurd. And to imply its passage was the only way we can get money for New Orleans is even a greater insult. Thankfully, ANWAR drilling was defeated in the Senate last week.

Democrats in Congress should call a moratorium on all actions and outlaw lobbyists, admit we're in a state of emergency, and see whether there is any way we can create a real democracy here in the United States — not a winner-take-all, where elections are stolen, but a representative democracy of the people.

We need a democracy where people have their basic needs met with healthy food (not modified or chemicalized); affordable housing and health care; free quality education; no barbaric death penalty; reasonable work hours and conditions; and infrastructure that includes affordable public transportation; and, most importantly, an end to this horrendous exploitation of other humans and the planet by the wealthy.

Mara Duman
Albany

Watching diligently for sneaky legislation

Thank God the efforts of senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer to block any version of the defense bill opening the Arctic up for oil drilling worked.

Not only can we not allow drilling in the precious area for an extremely small amount of oil, but we cannot allow Republicans to sneak drilling provisions into future bills.

Politics disgust me, but I'm watching and I hope everyone else in the United States is also.

Alicia Jaffe
Albany

We are fighting for oil resources

Despite what pro-administration critics say, the media have gone out of their way to give the benefit of doubt about extremely questionable policies and actions.

On Sept. 11, 2001, America was attacked by terrorists who were mainly from Saudi Arabia, an oppressive country with lots of oil, but an American ally. In response, we invaded and occupied another oppressive country with lots of oil, but not our ally. Meanwhile, we treated Saudi Arabia with kid gloves.

If we're against tyranny, why did we give arms and money to Saddam in the 1980s, even though he was slaughtering his countrymen? Or why didn't we send a couple of divisions to Darfur to stop the Sudanese government-backed militia from committing genocide. Is it because the Sudanese don't have oil?

In the war on terror at the moment, president got Ds and Fs. Apparently it's not a high priority for him.

These facts show we are not fighting for democracy or against terrorism, but for domination of oil resources. The rest is pretext. Is that what we want our young men and women to be doing for?

Robert A. Noonan
Albany

treat widows, veterans

The media are condemning Wal-Mart for labor-law violations.

Yet, we have some U.S. veterans and widows who are unaware of some provisions they could be receiving. I think it's a dirty shame what they are doing to our veterans and their widows.

Ralph Phillips
El Cerrito

Team helps others get rid of their clutter

By Jennifer Shaw
CORRESPONDENT

People who want to eliminate clutter from their homes must first examine the emotional aspects of the items they strive to keep.

Barb's message professor, Stephanie Barbic, and family friend Jill Lebeau bring to the Bay Area workshops throughout the East Bay. Their goal is to help people bring order to their lives by bringing order to their clutter.

"We can create a system, but only 20 percent of (the solution) is in their mind. The rest will be a permanent system that they change the way they're thinking about things," Barbic says. "People are always 'should' themselves. They have been handed the clutter and they feel obligated to keep it."

Barbic, an El Cerrito resident whose business is called Mind Home Business, has participated with Lebeau to address the clutter of thought patterns on how to organize our lives. The workshops, including one in September at the Kensington Library, are to coincide with an ongoing shift toward wanting to simplify, says Barbic. They are regularly at the Elephant Pharmacy in Berkeley (elephantpharmacy.com), and will be at a workshop at the Orinda Library on Jan. 18 at 7 p.m.

Lebeau, a Berkeley resident with a private practice in Albany, has her clients relinquish unhealthy attachment beliefs and fears. The transformation, she says, can be rapid.

It's about helping people un-

MORE INFO:

For more information about Barbic's work, call 510-813-5320 or visit www.mindyourhomebusiness.org. Lebeau can be reached at 510-849-1010.

derstand that until they become aware of how they are thinking, they'll keep recreating to the exact same circumstances. I teach practical steps of de-cluttering the mind," she says.

"If your thoughts are in the past, you're going to live with sadness, regret, guilt and grief. If you focus on the future, you will live with anxiety, fear, doubt and confusion. This is where most people think until they develop an awareness of focus."

This focus depends on establishing boundaries that become the criteria for assessing which items evoke a sense of well-being — and which things create a feeling of depletion.

"I searched my whole life for the keys to happiness, and as I found very potent concepts and practices that were helpful to me, I wove them together into what I call rapid transformation," she said.

"The focus is on what's happening now. Our power is always found in the present. When we feel deserving, that's when we do things differently and not a second before that."

Barbic, who has a business degree with a minor in accounting, offers practical steps for de-cluttering your home. The membership director for the Bay Area chapter of the National Association of Professional Organizers, she ascribes to the SPACE model, as



JOANNA JHANDASTAFF

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER

Stephanie Barbic talks about organizing the physical clutter in your life during a discussion group in September at the Kensington Library. Barbic partners with family therapist Jill Lebeau on free workshops throughout the East Bay designed to help people bring order to their homes and minds.

outlined by Julie Morgenstern in her book "Organizing from the Inside Out" (Owl Books, 1998).

The first task is to sort items, then discard the unwanted things, assign a home for objects, and lastly "containerize and equalize," which is the part of the strategy to maintain organization, Barbic explains.

"Purging is where you make the decision. How are you going to redirect your energy? How does a particular item reflect

your values (in present day)," she adds, noting that the weight of making decisions can have a paralyzing effect.

"The quick fix is to buy containers, and sometimes that masks our over-consumption. ... The container is the last item in the organizing process."

Part of the paralysis stems from a tendency to take on too much of the organizing task at one time. Instead, Barbic recommends committing to working in 15-minute increments.

"Start with the little things. Pull out the things that make you happy; throw out the things you don't want. You have to build the muscle of decision making," she says. "With thousands of pounds of clutter, you can't lift it all at once."

Lebeau teaches other classes that are inspired by the concept of intention espoused by Wayne Dyer, the works of contemporary mystic Eckhart Tolle — such as his "The Power of Now: A Path to Spiritual Enlightenment" (New World Library, 1999) — and the "wisdom schools," such as the Kabbala. She maintains that staying in the present guards against adhering to such self-deprecating thoughts as why one has allowed the clutter to mount in the first place, or a feeling that completing the organizing task is unattainable.

"The key question always is to ask what effect is this having on my energy, including the belief (you're) holding onto, because we live in a world of energy and attraction. If we want more abundance, the key is learning how to generate and sustain high energy," she says. "You make room for your soul. We both see it that way."

CERRITO SCHOOL NOTES

Cerrito High School

GENSICS NEWS: ECHS Forensics competed in the College Preparatory School Invitational in Oakland last week. Representing El Cerrito were Gressel, John Young, Sally Walsh, Alison Fitch and Sharon Myers in varsity, and Tyler Parra, MacMaster, Cassarha, Chela Manandhar and Neil Celis in junior varsity. John was a semifinalist and sixth speaker at the tournament. Amit was a quarterfinalist. Alison was a double-octafinalist. Brian was second seed, a double-octafinalist as well as sixth speaker.

CLUBS: The Pageturners book club will discuss Cheryl Peck's "Repeal of the Paste Eaters: Memoirs of a collection of a woman's various childhood tales, on Wednesday, Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. in Mrs. Miller's room (#33).

Kindergarten Elementary

BERGARTEN TOUR: The second kindergarten tour of the school year will be on Wednesday, Jan. 11 at 9 a.m. in the library. If you would like to join the tour, please call Patty Enrado at penrado@ysd.k12.ca.us or 510-526-6774.

— Craig Lazzarotti

School Notes items can be e-mailed to journal@cctimes.com.

ALBANY SCHOOL NOTES

Albany High School

SENIOR BULLETIN: The December Senior Bulletin is available in the counseling office or on the AHS Web site at albanyschools.k12.ca.us/shs. To access the Senior Bulletin, click on "Counseling Office," then "College Planning." New college, scholarship and financial aid information is included in the Senior Bulletin.

PRINTER CARTRIDGES: Save all those printer cartridges, laser cartridges, cell phones and PDAs, and bring them in to the main office. As you see your relatives over the holidays, let them know that they can recycle all these items and help out your high school at the same time.

Albany Middle School

MUSIC TRYOUTS: Tryouts for the school musical will take place the week after winter break. The reading auditions will take place Thursday, Jan. 5, for eighth graders, and Friday, Jan. 6, for seventh and sixth graders. Singing auditions will take place Monday and Tuesday of the following week. This year's play, "From the Shores of Piedmont," is a comedy that parodies "8 Mile." Eligibility for the play is the same as after-school sports: no F's and a C average. More information will follow after winter break.

PROGRESS REPORTS: Progress reports for students in danger of receiving a D/F for the second quarter have been mailed home. Those students making satisfactory progress will not receive a progress report in the mail.

PTA MEETING: The next PTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. in the library. All are invited to attend.

YEARBOOK COPIES: Information about reserving a copy of the 2006 AMS

yearbook will go home at Advisory on Wednesday, Jan. 4. The cost is \$25 through Jan. 31 and goes up to \$30 in February. The last day to reserve a yearbook will be March 3. There will be no yearbooks sold after March 3.

COLLEGE ENRICHMENT: Registration for Spring Kids College enrichment classes begins Tuesday, Jan. 3, at 7:45 in the AMS office. Classes this session include mixed media art, cartooning, knitting, chess and calligraphy. Tuesday-Friday classes begin the week of Jan. 17; Monday classes begin Jan. 23. Brochures with the class descriptions and registration forms have been sent home with students, and extras are available in the office. For information, contact Teresa Barnett at teresabarnett@yahoo.com.

Cornell Elementary

HEAD LICE: Cornell has had a reported case of pediculosis capitis (head lice) recently. The condition can spread quickly at school because of the frequent close contact with other children. You can help keep the problem under control by frequently checking your child's hair and scalp at home.

CARTRIDGE RECYCLING: Please continue to help with the recycling of inkjet and laser cartridges. It will help the environment and earn extra cash. Put your empty cartridges in zip-lock bags and drop them off in the office. The school also collects old cell phones.

Marin Elementary

KNITTING CLUB: The school is offering a knitting club on Wednesdays at lunch from 12:15-12:45. The club had almost 30 students the week of Dec. 5. The club

is looking for some adults and/or teens who know how to knit to support it. If you can help, please contact office staff.

PTA MEETING: The PTA will meet in December. The next meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 19 from 8:30-10 a.m.

COMMUNITY SING: The school-wide Marin Community Sing will be held at 8:35 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 25.

Ocean View Elementary

SITE COUNCIL: The School Site Council and English Language Learners Committee will meet in January to review student achievement data and make decisions on the allocation of categorical funding. Dates will be announced. This is the last chance to nominate a parent to participate — elections will happen the first week of January via newsletter with the nominated candidates.

PARENT EVENING: The annual parent evening will be held Jan. 26 in the library, and will feature information about ways to support your child's learning and about the Title 1 program. If your child qualifies for Title 1 services, you will get a special invitation, but the evening is open to all interested parents. The goal is to have all students meeting or exceeding grade-level standards and/or making satisfactory progress to achieve the goals of their Individualized Education Program.

— Bob Menzinger

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SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Albany

Albany Senior Center — Weekdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 846 Masonic Ave. Walking group Mondays, 9 a.m. Literature, writing memoirs, line dancing, exercise, art and Paratransit information. 510-524-9122.

El Cerrito

Christ Lutheran Senior Center — Mondays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 780 Ashbury Ave. Conversational German and Spanish, current events, computers, needlecrafts and exercise. 510-524-1050.

St. John's Senior Center — Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 6500 Gladys Ave. Needlecrafts, pressed-flower card-

making, painting and drawing. There will be a potluck lunch at noon and bingo at 12:30 p.m. 510-237-3808.

The Open House — Mondays-Thursdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Fridays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. 6500 Stockton Ave. Monthly tea dance; senior excursions. Mind Words and weekly cash bingo. 510-215-4340.

Kensington

Kensington Senior Activity Center — Thursdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Ave. There will be a potluck lunch Thursday; bring a dish to serve four to six people or donate \$3. 510-526-9146.

— Dora Scardina

Mail

FROM PAGE A1

Henderson said former customers with mailboxes there can continue to retrieve their mail when it reopens. She also said she will attempt to retrieve any uncollected mail before the post office returns it to its senders.

Gus Ruiz, a spokesman for

the United States Post Office Bay Valley District, suggested that residents open a post office box at the post office, which is not subject to market demands.

"That's the danger with a private business like that," Ruiz said. "You never know when they'll go out of business. We're bound by law not to do that."

Reach Alan Lopez at 510-243-3578 or alopez1@cctimes.com.

Obituaries and In Memoriam

Kaya Apaydin

June 15, 1925 - December 11, 2005

Kaya Apaydin, architect, athlete and political activist, died in the Montclair hills home he designed and built 53 years ago, surrounded by three of his five children on Sunday, December 11, 2005. Kaya was born in Istanbul, Turkey, the son of Zekai & Vasiye Apaydin. Zekai was Turkish ambassador to Russia and Great Britain and member of Ataturk's cabinet during the period establishing the modern Turkish state. As a result Kaya spent his early years in Moscow and also attended schools in Belgium and Turkey.

After WWII, Kaya came to study architecture at Cal Berkeley and met and married Jean Moore Webster, a war widow with two small children. After graduating in 1951 Kaya co-founded the architectural firm Akol, Angell & Apaydin, an East Bay institution for over 25 years (& still practicing). Kaya was captain of the Cal soccer team, an avid tennis player and sailor. He arranged many sailing trips around Turkey and the Mediterranean, sharing his passion with family and friends. One of his biggest dreams was realized when he sailed "the Fortune" from the east coast across the Atlantic to Turkey. Kaya invented a novel design for a sailboat that was under construction in his garage at the time of his death. Kaya was keenly interested in world events and politics and devoted to the American ideals of racial equality and justice. A dedicated Democrat, he worked on numerous local, state and national campaigns. He was a past President of the Montclair-Greater Oakland Democratic Club and the World Federalists Association of N. California. Kaya was known as a unique, multi-talented character to all who met him and the music, political debate and Turkish meals at the Apaydin's will be remembered by many. Kaya is survived by his five children, Chris, Anne, Serra, Janan, and Tamrin; his six grandchildren, Liberty, Marc, Isabel, Olivia, Leyla, and Miles; his two great grandchildren Morgan and Rosemary Jean; and his sister, Leyla Yerdel, of Ankara, Turkey.

Friends are invited to a celebration of his life at 2:00 pm Sunday Jan. 15 at the Lake Temescal Beach House in Oakland.

Memorial donations may be made to the Kaya & Jean Apaydin Scholarship Endowment at UC Berkeley and sent to University Relations, 2080 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94720-4200 Attn: Dan Estropia.

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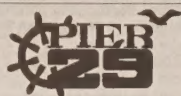
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Montclair Bistro

6118 Medau Place, Montclair Village, (510) 482-8282

Chef Henry Vorriede's philosophy of his restaurant, Montclair Bistro, is Metrix Cuisine, which he finds is "a synergy between the food on the table, the art on the walls, and the ambience of the restaurant. The result is a feeling of comfort and harmony between the food and the surroundings." The Bistro's cuisine is Creative California with a French Flare and offers gourmet delicacies for even the most discriminating palate. The dining experience is enhanced with a full bar and more than 150 wines and Vintage Ports. *Montclair Bistro offers lunch, dinner, Happy Hour and Sunday Brunch. Please visit our ad for hours of operation. Reservations are recommended but not required. Visit www.montclairbistro.com.*

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Good food, friendly service, and comfortable atmosphere describe Pier 29 Waterfront Restaurant. For over 30 years the restaurant has been located adjacent to the Park Street Bridge overlooking the Alameda/Oakland estuary. The "Pier" offers an extensive menu featuring fresh seafood, Angus New York steak, prime rib, pasta, teriyaki ribs, daily specials, and much more. The theme in the kitchen is "good homestyle cooking." Brunch is served on weekends from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and the popular early bird menu is featured daily. Every table has a view of the water and there is plenty of free parking. *The Pier is open 7 days a week. New business hours: Sun. - Thurs. 9 a.m. - 10 p.m., Fri. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 11 p.m. Breakfast - Lunch - Dinner.*

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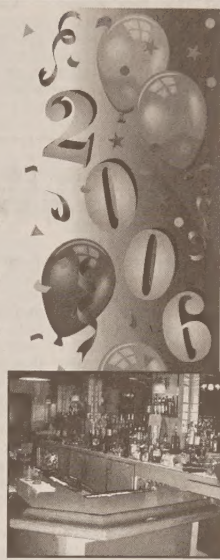
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Waterfront

FROM PAGE A1

"Citizens for the Albany Shoreline drafted (Measure C), put it on the ballot and fought like blazes to make it happen," said Cheasty, a co-founder of that group, as well as the East Shore Parks group. "CESP was supporting it in every way we could."

In addition, CESP lobbied for state park bonds, including 1988's Prop. 70, which set aside \$25 million to buy land for the Eastshore Park. An East Bay Regional Park District bond added \$15 million to the cause.

In 1992, Gov. Pete Wilson signed AB754, authored by then-Assemblyman and current Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, giving the park district the OK to buy land for a "recreational facility harmonious with its natural setting."

Cheasty believes a similar process can happen for the Golden Gate Fields land.

"I think eventually the Albany shoreline will be brought into the Eastshore State Park," he said.

Citizens for the Albany Shoreline was revitalized about a year ago in response to Caruso's plans to pursue a development, Parker said.

The group called a meeting Nov. 20 where members decided to recruit residents to the Dec. 1 meeting of the city's waterfront committee, where a Caruso representative was making the first presentation of the development before a city commission.

While waterfront development had been the subject of sometimes fierce debate at City Council meetings, Parker said they had been attended primarily by supporters of the Caruso project, which he believed didn't represent the opinion of most Albany residents.

"We're sending the message that it's never going to happen again," he said. "At a meeting where it's important, we will prob-

ably fill the room. And we will probably fill the room repeatedly if need be."

Caruso's firm, Caruso Affiliated, opened an office on Solano Avenue 10 months ago, hired a public relations firm headed by former state assemblywoman Dion Aroner, and has held periodic meetings at people's homes to discuss the development, the most recent round of which started two weeks ago.

Waterfront development opponents characterize their opposition to the public relations campaign as a David versus Goliath scenario, though Matt Middlebrook, an executive with Caruso Affiliated, sees it differently.

"Our sole intention since the day we opened our office nearly a year ago is to do our best to understand what residents in Albany would be interested in regarding potential development at Golden Gate Fields," Middlebrook said. "We have invested time and resources into reaching as many people in the community as we can."

Middlebrook also downplayed the importance of the Dec. 1 meeting.

"It was one more meeting in a very long public process," he said.

After Ladbroke bought the racetrack in 1989 for \$41 million, it proposed a plan to bring a 24-hour card club with up to 150 tables. The plan, which Albany voters narrowly approved in a 1995 referendum, lost in court five years later.

Meanwhile, in 1999, Ladbroke sold Golden Gate Fields to Canadian firm Magna Entertainment Corp. Headed by auto parts mogul Frank Stronach, the company had no interest in a card room but did see the property as ripe for development.

In 2002, Magna submitted Rancho San Antonio, a million-square-foot development plan with luxury hotels, a conference or entertainment center, restaurants, and specialty shops.

Following criticism of the plan from environmental groups and

PROFILES

Here are profiles of the groups at the center of the debate about the future of the Albany waterfront:

Citizens for East Shore Parks

Headed and co-founded by attorney and former Albany mayor Robert Cheasty, CESP was formed in 1985 to represent the interests of a number of environmental groups. They include Citizens for the Albany Shoreline, Save the Bay, the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the California Native Plant Society, and the Urban Creeks Council. CESP is overseen by four officers and a 13-person board of directors but is not an organization open to individual membership. CESP and other environmental organizations oppose development around the Golden Gate Fields racetrack while the track still operates. They want to see 85 percent of the land now occupied by the track as open space with limited development near the freeway to replace the racetrack. www.eastshorepark.org. 510-461-4665

others, Magna withdrew it and brought in Caruso Affiliated, known for its successful retail developments in Southern California.

In October, Caruso unveiled plans for 250-300 apartments on top of 350,000 square feet of retail at the Golden Gate Fields parking lots. Middlebrook said a formal development application would likely be submitted to the city early next year. The plan also calls for a 2.25-acre park along Fleming Point; a clean-up and expansion of the area's beach, marsh and creek; and a 20,000-square-foot community space.

The application will likely kick off an environmental review process that could lead to a vote for the development under Measure C. Cheasty and others said they didn't believe residents would support the new plan.

"I'm wondering if they're ever

Citizens for the Albany Shoreline

The group organized a turnout of nearly 100 people to a Dec. 1 waterfront committee meeting in a show of opposition to the Caruso Affiliated plan for retail and housing at Golden Gate Fields. It focuses on the Albany shoreline, unlike CESP, which looks at broader shoreline issues. "We're mostly all Albany residents," said co-chair Bill Dann, "which includes the 600 Sierra Club members in Albany." www.albanyshoreline.org. 510-525-6740.

The Sierra Club

With more than 750,000 members, it's one of the largest and oldest environmental organizations in the country and a supporting member of CESP. As the chair of the East Bay Public Lands Committee, El Cerrito resident and former mayor Norman La Force acts as the point person for issues related to the waterfront. The Sierra Club's positions on the waterfront, he said, had to be approved by

three club committees. "It's a very elaborate process," said La Force, who is also vice president of CESP. www.sierraclub.org. Sierra Club National Headquarters: 415-977-5500.

Albany Waterfront Coalition

A group of about 30 residents formed two years ago and chaired by Albany architect Howard McNenny. He said it was formed in response to the CESP. Sierra Club plan for the waterfront and frustration over a lack of improvements for the area. The group has not taken a formal position on the Caruso development but McNenny believes it's a "good start." www.albanywaterfrontcoalition.org. 510-527-8476.

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Advertising supplement to The Berkeley Voice, The Journal, The Montclair, The Piedmont

Median home price up 16.2 percent from last November

Sales decrease 11.2 percent, compared to November 2004

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS
The median price of an existing single-family detached home in California in November increased 16.2 percent and sales decreased 11.2 percent compared to the same period a year ago, according to the California Association of Realtors.

The California housing market continues to experience year-over-year double-digit price appreciation, which is consistent with our expectation that the statewide median price will increase by 16 percent this year," said C.A.R. president Vince Malta.

Escrow sales of existing, single-family detached homes in California totaled 579,560 in November at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, according to information collected by C.A.R. from more than 90 local Realtor associations statewide. Statewide home sales activity decreased 11.2 percent from the 652,340 sales pace recorded in November 2004.

The statewide sales figure represents what the total number of

homes sold during 2005 would be if sales maintained the November pace throughout the year. It is adjusted to account for seasonal factors that typically influence home sales.

The median price of an existing, single-family detached home in California during November 2005 was \$548,400, a 16.2 percent increase over the \$471,980 median for November 2004, C.A.R. reported. The November 2005 median price increased 1.8 percent compared with October's \$538,770 median price.

"While year-to-date sales in November were 1.7 percent above last year's pace, we are starting to see the 'soft landing' we have been expecting," said C.A.R. vice president and chief economist Leslie Appleton-Young.

"The year-to-year decline in sales is not surprising, given the market was so strong in November 2004. Additionally, rising mortgage interest rates, which have moved above 6 percent over the last few months, contributed to the slowdown in sales."

Highlights

■ C.A.R.'s Unsold Inventory Index for existing, single-family de-

HIGHEST MEDIAN PRICES

Manhattan Beach, \$1,803,000
Newport Beach, \$1,474,500
Laguna Beach, \$1,360,000
Palos Verdes Estates, \$1,350,000
Burlingame, \$1,277,250
Los Gatos, \$1,260,000
Rancho Palos Verdes, \$1,197,500
Calabasas, \$1,195,000
Danville, \$1,096,500

tached homes in November 2005 was 3.9 months, compared with 2.8 months (revised) for the same period a year ago. The index indicates the number of months needed to deplete the supply of homes on the market at the current sales rate.

■ Thirty-year fixed mortgage interest rates averaged 6.33 percent during November 2005, compared with 5.73 percent in November 2004, according to Freddie Mac. Adjustable mortgage interest rates averaged 5.14 percent in November 2005 compared with 4.15 percent in November 2004.

■ The median number of days it took to sell a single-family home

See REPORT, Page B2



DARREL GOEMAAT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

FRAN HOGLUND SITS on the spiral staircase of her new two-story townhome. Fran and her husband Ray moved to a smaller condo after living for more than 25 years in their home.

Downsizing to match needs, lifestyle

BY WILLIAM SLUIS

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Those real estate experts and promoters of "active adult" developments who tell you to downsize your home at age 55 may be right. Wait until you're 65 or 75 and the decision to leave the family homestead may only become more difficult, say those

who have studied the effects of aging. "Some older people feel they are prisoners of their house and garden, but they are reluctant to downsize or move," housing consultant Steve Hovany said.

Selling off the old homestead isn't for everyone.

See DOWNSIZE, Page B5

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— Author Unknown



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Richards receives Prudential community service award



PRUDENTIAL CALIFORNIA REALTY'S GRAND LAKE office manager Amberson McCulloch, right, presents the Silver Chalice to Realtor Michael Richards. Prudential California Realty's Grand Lake office presents this award to the agent who best exemplifies the office's commitment to community service. "Michael has been very involved with Lakeview School devoting significant time to and energy to beautifying the school grounds," said McCulloch. "He is also involved in a number of other community activities." Richards can be reached at 510-301-1351.

Classic combines comfort, style and convenience



BY DON AND DAVE
RUNYAN

With a winning combination of comfort and good looks, it's easy to see what makes an Adirondack-style chair a classic. This build-it-yourself version adds "convenience" to the formula: it folds up for easy storage.

Designed to be as roomy and sturdy as any stationary model, the project is perfect for a comfortable and relaxing day in the sun. Once the sun goes down—or in the off season—just lift the rear locking rail and fold the back forward in one easy motion and the chair is ready for storage in the garage or shed.

All of the project's 20 pieces are traced from full-size patterns, making it perfect for woodworkers of almost any skill level. To build, simply trace, cut, sand, assemble and paint or stain.

The completed chair measures 37 inches tall by 24 inches wide by 39 inches deep when

open and folds to 50 inches long by 24 inches wide by just 20 inches deep.

The Folding Adirondack Chair plan, No. 851, is \$9.95 and includes step-by-step directions with photos, traceable patterns, construction diagrams, a shopping list and cutting schedule and a toll-free help line for project questions.

A package of plans for an entire set of (stationary) Adirondack-style outdoor furniture, No. C64, is \$24.95 and includes a chair, a love seat, a footrest and a table. A catalog picturing hundreds of do-it-yourself projects is \$2. Please include \$3 for postage and handling (except catalog-only orders) and allow about two weeks for delivery.

To order by mail, clip this article and send it with a check or money order to U-Bild Features, c/o Hills Newspapers, P.O. Box 2383, Van Nuys, CA 91409. To order by credit card, call 800-828-2453. Visit U-Bild on the Web at u-bild.com.

Report

FROM PAGE B1

was 39 days in November 2005, compared with 36 days (revised) for the same period a year ago.

Regional sales data are not adjusted to account for seasonal factors that can influence home sales. The MLS median price and sales data for detached homes are generated from a survey of more than 90 Realtor associations throughout the state. Multiple Listing Services median price and sales data for condominiums are based on a survey of more than 60 associations. The median price for both detached homes and condominiums represents closed escrow sales.

In a separate report covering more localized statistics generated by C.A.R. and DataQuick Information Systems, 96.1 percent or 372 of 387 cities and communities showed an increase in their respective median home prices from a year ago.

DataQuick statistics are based on county records data rather than MLS information. DataQuick Information Systems is a subsidiary of Vancouver-based MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates.

Large changes in local median home prices typically indicate both local home price appreciation, and often, large shifts in the composition of housing market activity. Some of the variations in median home prices may be exaggerated due to compositional changes in housing demand.

Simple tips for building your nest egg

Part one of two

If you have been paying attention to national news headlines, you are probably familiar with the fact that Americans are not doing a very good job of saving money. It used to be that everyday people would regularly put away money for the fabled "rainy day," socking away more than 10 percent of their income two decades ago.

Unfortunately, that percentage has actually turned negative in recent years, meaning we are spending more, saving less, and even going into debt.

To highlight the current state of savings habits, A.G. Edwards recently released the results of a study known as the Nest Egg Index, which ranked the top 200 communities across the country, and the 50 states, based on residents' personal savings and investing behavior. Some areas of the country are doing better than others. The city of Oakland, for example, finished 14th in the rankings.

So what should we take away from these results? For one thing, saving does not have to be a long, complicated process; it can actually be broken down into several simple steps. In the first of this two-part series, we will discuss the first six of a dozen simple tips:

Start early. Time is your biggest ally in building a nest egg. Whether you are teaching your children the value of saving at an early age, or even if you use a major life event such as a job change to kick-start your own savings plan, time works to your advantage—typically in the form of compounding interest or dividends on your savings.

Stop procrastinating. Some people suffer an early defeat simply because the task may seem daunting. The first step is to sit down and make a plan, setting long-term savings goals first. From there, you can fill in any short- and medium-term objectives, and calculate what you will need to set aside from each paycheck to meet all your goals. The important thing is to just get started, and you can keep the momentum going by making savings an activity that continues even after you have achieved your shorter-term objectives.

Prioritize your long-term nest egg needs. Some goals are best met using savings versus debt, but you need to distinguish the two. For example, if saving for both college and retirement proves to be too much, you are probably better off taking out loans for college than trying to borrow to pay post-retirement living expenses. You need to set savings priorities and then find ways to address them.

Pay yourself first. You have probably heard this one before, and it truly is one of the keys to savings success. Saving should be just as routine as paying the bills. Take advantage of tools such as direct deposit to divert even a small amount of each paycheck into a savings or investment account. By putting it away first, you are less likely to spend on impulse items or other things that do not fit with your long-term plans.

Participate in employer-sponsored savings and retirement plans. Making pre-tax contributions to your employer's 401(k) plan—

or other similar savings plan can help you build your nest egg savings more quickly. In any form of a matching contribution, which would essentially mean you would be getting paid to make are several other advantages of these types of plans, so you initially want to explore your options if you are not already participating.

Diversify. Spread your investments out across a variety of investments such as stocks and bonds, a number of different industries and market segments. Proper diversification helps avoid unnecessary risk and adds balance to your portfolio.

These are just a few ideas you started. Check back next week for the second half of our savings tips.

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Leila Gough is an Advisor, President with A.G. Edwards, Oakland. She can be reached at 510-452-8060.

New conforming loan limits announced



KAREN SENZIG
Mortgage Madress

Every year, sometime between Thanksgiving and the New Year, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac either play Santa Claus or the Grinch as they announce their new conforming loan limits.

Conforming loan limits determine the maximum loan amounts for single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes, that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will purchase that have been approved under their guidelines.

After playing the Grinch for the last two years, they announced that Santa Claus has come to town. The new limits have increased a whopping 16 percent from last year's increase, which was around 6.8 percent.

This is the second largest increase in loan limits since 1979 when increases were set at 16.2 percent.

■ Single-family home limits have increased to \$417,000 from \$359,650

■ Two-unit limits have increased to \$533,850 from \$460,400

■ Three-unit limits have increased to \$645,300 from \$556,500

■ Four-unit limits have increased to \$801,950 from \$691,600.

Conforming loan interest rates usually run between one-quarter and one-half percent below jumbo loan interest rates. The

new conforming loan limits will make qualifying for a loan a bit easier for many Bay Area homebuyers and homeowners refinancing their homes, but the loan limits are still well below the median prices here. The median price for a single-family home in the San Francisco Metropolitan Area in the 2005 third quarter was \$721,900.

Several years ago Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac determined that Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands were higher cost areas than the Bay Area. Third quarter 2005 median priced homes in Honolulu was \$619,000 and yet the maximum conforming loan limits for the high cost areas are: single family home, \$625,000;

two-units, \$800,775; three-units, \$976,750 and four units, \$1,202,925.

We wonder what we need to do to make the powers that be wake up and smell the coffee.

It is time that high-price areas are carved out like the lands of high-priced properties such as the Bay Area, Los Angeles and Orange County, California and the New York metropolitan area. There are other areas that should be identified and qualify as high-price areas so that more people can enjoy the lower interest rates offered by the conforming loan amounts.

Karen Senzig is co-owner of Montclair Mortgage with her husband, Scott. She can be reached at 510-339-8511 or ksenzig@aol.com.

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New Realtor presidents imagine the home of the future

We live in a newer home. There are many features in this new home we didn't have in the old. For instance, there is recessed lighting, remote control and an automatic water system. All the rooms, except for the baths are hi-tech wired. I reminded me of a trip, when I was in Detroit, Michigan. My Dad was big on taking his children to museums and his lights (whether we wanted or not). This particular trip was to see an exhibit of what life would be like in the future. Homes, cars, clothing, whole shebang. I never forgot what happened to the gadget that cleaned your teeth in two seconds? Where are the disposable ones that looked like something Jetsons would wear? Where's the calculator? I want to push a button and say "Earl Gray — hot". We were not as advanced as predicted or were the imaginations of the future too far out? I typed into my

trusty computer "homes of the future" and came up with some interesting sites. Come visit with me. At Usnews.com, I visited the home (mansion) of Bill Gates. Of course, everything was hi-tech. There was a huge indoor/outdoor pool. An entire building was an exercise facility. The home boasted a theater with a popcorn machine. A garage was built entirely underground, large enough to park 10 cars. Since I like a good party, my favorite was the dining room with seating for 24 people. I saw an apartment of the future named "comHOME". The kitchen was set up so one would never have to eat alone by inviting on-screen guests. The living room could be linked with another for virtual visits. At the Jackson County Museum of History near Kansas City, there is a 1953 exhibit of an All Electric Home. A remote switch in the master bedroom turns on the coffee maker in the kitchen. There are

moon glow lights in the hallways that come on at dusk. Texas A&M is working on a future home that would generate its own electricity. This would be done with a noiseless dishwasher-sized fuel cell. Learn more about it at recenter.tamu.edu/news. The Web site Smarthome.com is filled with gadgetry and remotes of every sort. As you tour this futuristic home, there are links to order items, as many of these hi-tech innovations already exist! Try these. Remote control drapes. A self-operating lawnmower. Open the front door with a keypad. Bathroom floors that warm up. A small greenhouse attached to the kitchen, to provide fresh vegetables and herbs all year. I asked our local real estate association presidents what features they thought we would see in future homes. DeAnna Baldridge, Associated Real Property Brokers: "For my money my Jetson-like home would

have an instant meal preparer. An automatic housecleaning system would be great, as well." Hadl Monsef, Alameda Association of Realtors: "If I was building the home of the future two things would be of great importance. The first, as we say in real estate is location, location, location. The second would be energy efficient construction." Gib Souza, Bay East Association of Realtors: "Let's start with a teleporter that would allow us to be molecularly moved between locations. No more freeway back ups. I believe that eventually homes will be self-contained with their own power plants for energy and self contained waste disposal systems." Kim Clegghorn, Oakland Association of Realtors: "Walls will come with color. Instead of wood, materials such as plastics and tile will cover walls. We might not have to paint at all." Ron Egherman, Berkeley Association of Realtors: "Since I was

never a Jetsons fan, I'll have to resort to my own imagination. I'd have the lights turn on and off when entering or exiting a room. I'd love to have music controlled by voice command in all rooms, including outside on my deck, by my hot tub. I can dream can't I?" Felecial Favroth, Women's Council of Realtors East Bay Chapter: "Homes will come with 'Automatic Exercisers', so forget the gym and step inside a capsule that exercises your body for you. It only takes 20 minutes. Music or video is 'piped' and your body will feel like it has exercised for an hour without sweating." In the future we could use GPS instead of house numbers. Houses might rotate to get the best sunlight. Or how about a house that can change color according to your mood? That might stop those pesky neighbors from borrowing sugar all the time. There was a car of the future at that exhibit I saw oh, so many years



BOBBIE REID
Credit Worthy

ago. You could input your destination and by autopilot the car took you there. It showed the driver and front seat passenger turned around playing a game with the folks in the back seat. Now, wouldn't that type of automobile be an answer for the stress of driving in Bay Area traffic? I want one. So, where is it? Here's wishing good health and prosperity to all of you, as we begin another new year. Happy 2006!

Send comments via email to bobbierid@mindspring.com.

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Cleaning things Gretchen style

Number 449 in a series of true adventures in real estate. I don't understand mops, I told my friend Gretchen. "Me neither," she said. "I always mop floors on my hands and knees. It's not hard really, and I get those grungies that a mop won't get into the corners." Gretchen is on a new housecleaning regime having recently let a cleaning woman go. She's decided to do her house herself. In typical Gretchen fashion she has drawn up a schedule. "I mop every weekday," she said. "I mow a couple of weeks ago. You think that's enough?" "I thought two hours a day was it. Once the big projects are over — refrigerator cleaned out the shower scrubbed — what else she possibly spend two hours a day doing? Gretchen called her first week. She'd exceeded estimate, actually clocked 13 and a half hours. And that didn't count vacuuming which her husband did. But how was it? Was the house "Great" she told me. "The house sparkling." She'd done a lot of cleaning, things like taking all her china and glassware out of boards, washing and replacing inside. Also cleaning the stove and filter and going through the house wiping down the corners, sanitizing as she went. It took me longer than my cleaning woman because I did a lot of things she wouldn't have done," my friend pointed out. "But I can know that there are only a few areas of the house that I need to clean every week." She plans to concentrate on the kitchen, main floor and stairwell (where her dog mingles) and do the rest of the

house less often, maybe once a month. She's hoping to do weekly housekeeping in five hours, with double that time the fourth week of each month to allow for more deep cleaning. But she says, "Oh, you know, it's me. I love making plans, lists, schedules. I always intend to do it forever, but then..." Gretchen makes plans for everything. There is her plan for studying Italian, another for keeping her garage neat, and a schedule for working vegetarian food into meals at least half of the time. She's even worked out when to go grocery shopping to avoid "the bad times." For instance, she thinks she should go to Berkeley Bowl after yoga class on Tuesdays, but somehow, "Like everyone else, I end up go-

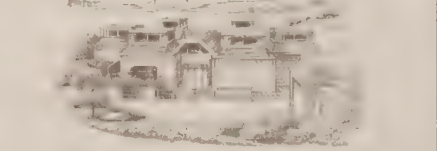
ing at the worst time — 5 o'clock." In a folder she labeled Quality of Life, Gretchen keeps her plans. Last year she made, and added to the folder, an elaborate scheme for maintaining her large garden. With the garden divided into 12 stations, she figured out which station she'd devote time to and when. I think that plan lasted a couple of weeks.

See TARPOFF, Page B4



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FROM PAGE B3

I asked if she'd used Mr. Clean Magic Erasers. We'd talked about them before she plunged in, and I knew she'd finally found them in stock at Safeway.

Oh, yes. Much enthusiasm for Magic Erasers from Gretchen. In fact, she'd gone back to the store to buy 20 of them, used them all.

"I'll probably use a million of them in my life," she told me. "They're now vital to my new cleaning plan."

It was my turn. I told about the studio cottage I cleaned this week, one of three apartments on the same lot that Anet and I just put on the market. The studio tenant moved out only a few days before our first open house and although she left it looking quite presentable, I wanted it to be pristine.

While Anet busied herself making small repairs (re-securing a closet pole, vacuuming out the furnace, and such), I washed everything in sight, removing all smudges and black marks from walls and woodwork and inside closets.

I wanted to shoot the painter who last painted this small cottage. He or she slopped paint onto light fixtures, cabinet handles and unpainted wood shelves. Spatters were everywhere on the floors. I was furious. I spent hours dissolving and scraping paint where it should never have been.

What a difference clean makes. I'm always surprised. Like Gretchen, I love clean. And I love furnishing. Just as I finished my ministrations, Sahdu, our stager, began carrying her already assembled goods into the cottage.

The next day I attacked the entry porch where trees and weather had deposited a black scum. Hot water, a little ammonia, a stiff scrub brush, and a lot of elbow grease later (applied on hands and knees), the porch surface looked ever so much better.

But the newish gray paint on the stair railing — a long one — was still blackened, so I started in on it. I went over all the rails and uprights, wiping them with a dry cloth after washing with a sponge. Violal Clean gray paint again.

What a difference clean makes.

I'm always surprised. Like Gretchen, I love clean. And I love furnishing. Just as I finished my ministrations, Sahdu, our stager, began carrying her already assembled goods into the cottage: An oval hooked rug patterned in blues and yellows, new, white filmy curtains, a table lamp with a beautifully plump ceramic base in blue and white, and more.

The rug laid on the wood floor, Sahdu turned to ironing the curtains, then hung them on the glistening windows. They were so pretty. The cottage looked so alive, so appealing and comfortable. Anet

and Sahdu and I oohed and aahed. We talked about how we could live in this tiny space with its little stove and refrigerator, sit outside on the porch in the afternoon, have joy.

I told Gretchen all of this. And Gretchen and I snuggled into a cozy conversation, as only good friends can who share understanding of how much fun it is to play house.

Pat Talbert and Anet Tarpoiff are residential real estate agents who can be reached at 653-2050 and at www.tarpoiffandtalbert.com.

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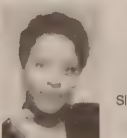


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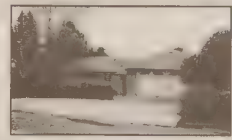
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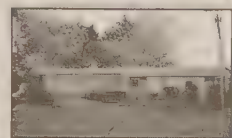
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Downsize

FROM PAGE B1

"Moving to another place, especially a smaller place, tends to be a totally discretionary decision. It's very easy to put it off. People don't let's talk about it next year," said Hovany, of Strategy Planning Associates in Schaumburg, Ill. Far from being reluctant, many of those who make the decision to move after age 55 are eager to get to a newer house, said Suzanne Hovany, marketing director for Hartz Homes.

"They want to travel, and they're ready to make the move, but they want a house with plenty of space," she said.

For Bill and Ann Kunovic, the decision to sell their 2,900-square-foot home in Vernon Hills, Ill., wasn't difficult.

"We were tired of doing maintenance on a big house, and our four sons all had left the nest," said Bill Kunovic.

The couple, who are in their mid-60s and are semiretired, are buying a 1,800-square-foot duplex in Oak Park, Ill., in an active adult development called Traditions at Flora Park. They had no problems selling their house in Vernon Hills.

Ann Kunovic said part of the attraction of moving 20 miles east is that they will be nearer to Lake Michigan. They have new development with a clubhouse and swimming pool and is adjacent to a golf course and a forest preserve. They also are making a move to a smaller house.

"We'll still be able to entertain family members when they come visit. Also, having a low-maintenance home will give us more time to volunteer at our church," said Ann Kunovic. "And we'll be able to avoid some additional traveling."

Where they apprehensive about downsizing?

"Not at all," she said. "We're really excited about making the move." The decision to move wasn't easy, however, for Fran and Ray Hoglund, who moved to a new house in Inverness, Ill., after more than a quarter-century in their home in Barrington, Ill. In fact, making up their minds took them several years.

"It was a very tough decision for us," said Fran Hoglund, a tax accountant. "We knew that moving would be traumatic. Moving is always difficult."

The couple, who are in their 60s, decided an elevator in their new home to make it easier for Ray Hoglund, who suffers from diabetes, to get up and down. The townhouse, built by Dartmoor Homes at Weatherstone development in Inverness, includes numerous upgrades, including custom cabinets and a spiral staircase. It is slightly larger than their former home.

Of their move, Fran Hoglund said, "It was the best decision we ever made."

Mary Lou Pollpeter and her husband, Ralph, found it easy to move to a new house in Lockport, Ill., because their former house, where they lived for more than 20 years, was only two and one half blocks away. "We were tired of shoveling snow, and my husband was tired of asking me to talk about moving," said Mary Lou Pollpeter. "We were eager to be around people our own age." Their new house at Lago Vista, an active adult community by Hartz, is almost the same size as their old home. Ralph Pollpeter, who is in his 60s, was able to continue his woodworking hobby by putting his equipment in the basement of their new house.

An appealing aspect of their new home is the Lago Vista clubhouse, which includes a swimming pool where she can exercise for an hour a day, said Mary Lou Pollpeter. She spends part of her time at nearby Dennis parish, where she helps provide computer advice.

On a recent weekend the couple held a block party for new residents, which attracted nearly 40 people.

Heather and George Fisher, who are now quite 55, decided it was time to downsize from their 3,500-square-foot Victorian house in Wheaton, Ill., which was built in 1924. Next year, they are moving to a 2,000-square-foot condo on the 12th floor of the Chestnut, a high-rise on Chicago's Near North Side.

"We went back and forth and debated the idea for quite a while, but finally we decided this was it," said Heather Fisher. "We had friends who live on the 18th floor of the building downtown and we saw their view, it made up our minds."

Their 22-year-old son, Jeremy, recently finished college, which helped spur their decision to downsize.

The couple held an estate sale and gave away a lot of things to charity so they wouldn't need to bring along huge amounts of furniture.

"We had all kinds of stuff, including antiques, but now it's gone and we don't miss it at all," said Heather Fisher.

There is a common conception that older buyers are eager to live in a development that includes a

swimming pool, recreation center and walking or biking trails.

While there is a sizable group that seeks such places to live, others simply want a home that is newer and perhaps smaller. Roughly two-thirds of retirees stay in the community where they have lived for years. Many cling to the houses where they raised their families.

The idea that everyone wants to move to the Sun Belt also is doubtful. Experts say droves of North-easters, who traditionally flock to Sun Belt states when their working days are over, are increasingly choosing cold-weather communities closer to where they already live.

Those who believe the need to downsize is urgent often cite fears that there is a housing price bubble, which could collapse, cracking any real estate nest egg accumulated by those approaching retirement.

Economist Ian Shepherdson is one of those who believes that real estate will be hard-hit within months.

An inevitable rise in mortgage interest rates will occur in 2006, causing house prices to shrink, said Shepherdson, of High Frequency Economics, Valhalla, N.Y.

"Nothing terrible will happen in the housing market immediately," he is telling clients. "But if Treasury yields (which help determine mortgage rates) continue their upward creep for another few months, things will take a very serious turn for the worse."

Consultant Hovany said that in the suburbs, older buyers are strongly attracted to elevator condo buildings, which are being constructed near downtown shopping areas and commuter rail stations.

"The average buyer of a suburban elevator condo is over the age of 60," he said.

While Florida remains the top destination for homebuyers older than 60, experts say the state's popularity as a retiree destination is slipping as cold-weather retirement communities lure more retirees.

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Wells Fargo Home Mgt. 925-736-1125 DOC# 6031180 Fees=\$1180	30-yr Fixed call	30-yr Fxd Jumbo call	10/1 ARM Jumbo call	5/1 ARM Jumbo call	PURCHASE - REFI - INV - All Credit Levels Lock in a LOW Rate Today! 925-736-1125 JUMBO 30 yr, 10/1 ARM, 5/1 ARM - Int Only
Wells Fargo Home Mgt. 866-689-1502 DOC# 6031180 Fees=\$1431	30-yr Fixed call	30-yr Fxd Jumbo call	5/1 ARM Jumbo 5.600 0.000 5.860 30 30	10/1 ARM Jumbo 6.000 0.000 6.041 30 30	100% to 1M. Free Pre Approva. Credit Lines to 3M *For Tier 2 relationships only
Absolute Mortgage Fund. 888-90-HOMES DOC# 6034776 Fees=\$1359	30-yr Fixed 5.875 0.000 5.895 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 6.125 0.000 6.155 30 30	15-yr Fixed 5.500 0.000 5.530 30 30	5/1 ARM 5.375 0.000 6.600 30 30	LOWEST RATES IN THE INDUSTRY! Free Float Downs Lender fees only \$399! CALL 888-90-HOMES *720 + FICO's only
Amerisave Mortgage Corp. 877-464-5218	30-yr Fixed 5.750 0.572 5.948 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 6.000 0.625 6.117 30 30	3/1 ARM 5.000 0.500 6.697 30 30	5/1 ARM 5.125 0.625 6.481 30 30	www.amerisave.com Fees guaranteed or we pay you \$300! Mention this ad and receive up to 50% off lender fees!
CMG Mortgage Services 800-958-5339 DOC# 60370755 Fees=\$1853	30-yr Fixed 5.825 1.750 5.950 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 6.000 1.250 6.139 30 30	3/1 ARM Jumbo 5.250 1.000 5.380 30 30	5/1 ARM Jumbo 5.375 1.000 5.486 30 30	OPEN SAT & SUN QUICK QUALIFIER OR NO INCOME LOANS AVAILABLE NO POINTS, LOANS AVAILABLE
citicoh.com 800-616-8208 DOC# 8132004 Fees=\$1690	30-yr Fixed 5.625 2.000 5.934 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 5.875 2.000 6.128 30 30	15-yr Fixed 5.250 2.000 5.763 30 30	15-yr Fxd Jumbo 5.500 2.000 5.919 30 30	Se habla Español Your mortgage solution Delivered! www.citicoh.com
Downey Savings & Loan 800-798-2148 DOC# 6037471 Fees=\$1428	30-yr Fixed 5.625 1.750 5.814 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 6.125 1.625 6.292 30 30	1-mo COPI ARM 1.250 1.000 5.999 30 30		Direct lender 47 yrs experience; fixed & adjustable mtgs. *Pot neg amort Apply online at www.downeysavings.com
E-mortgages.com 800-619-4400 DOC# 60114172 Fees=\$1837	30-yr Fixed 6.000 0.000 6.050 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 6.250 0.000 6.300 30 30	10/1 ARM Jumbo 6.000 0.000 6.590 30 30	5-yr Fixed 5.375 0.000 5.486 30 30	ARM=adjustable rate mortgage Companies pay a fee to be in this Guide *Ave 30 yr fixed conforming with 0 points Fees are estimated costs based on a \$175,000 purchase money loan and may vary from loan to loan. These are not inclusive of all costs and do not include points, prepaid interest, title insurance, etc. Click on "Fees" in "Current Mortgage Rates" section of website + contact each company for details. Copyright 2005, INFOTRAK National Data Services and Knight-Ridder
First Blackhawk Financial 800-796-MARY DOC# 60144055	30-yr Fixed 5.990 0.000 6.080 30 30	30-yr Fxd Jumbo 6.125 0.000 6.169 30 30	5/1 ARM Jumbo 5.625 0.000 5.855 30 30	10/1 ARM Jumbo 6.000 0.000 6.035 30 30	JUMBO AND SUPER JUMBO SPECIALIST Call 7 days per week 1(800) 796-MARY More rates at www.maryknight.com

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Rates based on \$175,000 loan for single family residence. Jumbo rates (loans in excess of \$417,000) based on \$450,000 loan. All rates are believed to be accurate but cannot be guaranteed and are subject to change without notice. Minimum downpayment requirements and other restrictions may apply. Closing costs may vary. Consider each company for details. Points include origination and discount fees. APR = annual percentage rate and is calculated by each company. Includes costs to obtain loan and private mortgage insurance if required. Lock=rate lock period. ARM=adjustable rate mortgage. Companies pay a fee to be in this Guide. *Ave 30 yr fixed conforming with 0 points Fees are estimated costs based on a \$175,000 purchase money loan and may vary from loan to loan. These are not inclusive of all costs and do not include points, prepaid interest, title insurance, etc. Click on "Fees" in "Current Mortgage Rates" section of website + contact each company for details. Copyright 2005, INFOTRAK National Data Services and Knight-Ridder

If you would like to be included in this Mortgage Guide, please call 781-276-1711

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As one year ends and another begins, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have continued to help us succeed.

Thank You and Best Wishes for a Prosperous 2006!

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Hairline cracks could cause later headaches

BY ALAN J. HEAVENS
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

Q: The wall below the siding on the exterior of our house, which is actually the top of the basement wall, has hairline cracks. We would like to patch them before painting. I went to the home center to purchase a patch kit, but none of the products mentioned that it was all right to paint after filling cracks. Could you give me the name of a product to fill these small cracks?

A: If the hairline cracks are in the

exterior of the concrete basement wall and are horizontal, they may be a sign of stress on the foundation and you may want to have them checked out. Just to be sure.

If the cracks are vertical, you could use concrete caulk to fill them. DAP's concrete caulk contains some silicone for better adhesion and moisture resistance. Most silicone caulks cannot be painted — in fact, several manufacturers state that on the tubes — but in this case, the amount of sil-

icone is small. I recently used this product on vertical cracks on exterior sections of the crawl space under my kitchen, and it seems to have done the job. I covered the repairs with a thin layer of vinyl-reinforced concrete mix.

For hairline cracks in the wood siding, if it is wood, I recommend MH Ready Patch, made by Zinsser. I've used it in exterior and interior applications over the years. Rather than fill in the cracks, I overspread them with compound, which seems

to prevent them from reopening. I sometimes have to repeat the process, sanding between coats, before I prime and paint.

Q: My stepson has moved into a townhouse and is learning the joys of home ownership. Years ago, I had a Readers Digest book on home repairs that I used a lot in my first home. Can you recommend a book for a novice to use in making home repairs?

A: The Readers Digest book is still available in updated form. But

there are other books that are better. One is "Home Basic: A Step-by-Step Guide to Home Maintenance and Repairs" by Homeowner, \$40. Another is "Black & Decker Photo Guide to Home Repairs" (Creative Publications). The reasons I prefer these are that one of the chief merits of yourself programs is that

See HEAVENS Page 2

COMING SOON

Piedmont

Stately 3+ bedroom, 2.5 bath brown shingle in a desirable Piedmont neighborhood. Formal dining with built-in buffet & window seat, family room with lovely outlook, 2 plus rooms, refinished wood floors, deck & yard.

Offered at \$1,295,000



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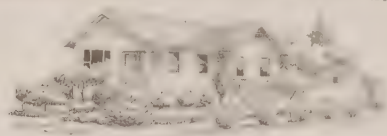
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The home is situated so that you experience the view and natural drama of the site from each room. This 3 level home is located at the end of a cul-de-sac, with 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, bonus room/office with separate entrance, terraced garden, 3 decks and boasts many new ecologically sensitive features.

Offered at \$879,000



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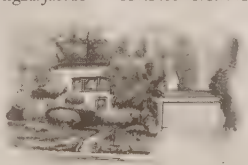
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By Appointment



OAKLAND
4115 OAKMORE ROAD
Classic Tudor with original details. 3bd/3 ba, fdr and large family room. Huge living room with soaring cathedral ceiling. See photos at: www.4115OakmoreRd.com
Regina Jacobs 339.8400~693.7973



SAN LEANDRO
1218 SANDELIN AVENUE
Beautiful home in quiet Bay-O-Vista neighborhood. Large 4/25 on large lot with great outdoor entertaining space. Hwd flrs and lots of upgrades.
Pamela Finney 339.8400~899.6326



NORTH OAKLAND
461 62ND STREET
3+bd/1.5bth Stunning Craftsman in North Oakland. Gorgeous orig. built-ins, updated kitchen & bath, sun room, detached garage. Minutes to UC, Hwys & pub transp.
Antoinette Radwan 339.8400~899.6331

OAKLAND
5214 E. 12TH STREET
Excellent opportunity to own a live/work warehouse. Consists of 3 offices or bedrooms, a tall roll up door, large garage/shop space, full kitch. 1.5ba.
Ken Nwokedi 899.6333~485.5119



BERKELEY
2067 BONAR STREET
Stylishly updated home w/ spacious new kitchen & baths, detached cottage has full bath and two rooms. Walk to BART, shopping and more.
See photo tour at:
PatriciaBennett.com 339.8400~482.9000

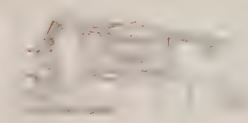


BELOW OAKMORE
3972 FRUITVALE
Wonderful 3/1 + artist studio & sep. ent. In serene lower Oakmore. Split lvl yard & patio for entertaining, close to Montclair/Fruitvale shops and freeways. A great school district & much more.
Robert M. Scott 339.8400~910.5179

DIMOND DISTRICT
3047 BERLIN WAY
Duplex w/2BD/1BA & 1BD/1BA on a 5280 sq ft lot. Fireplace in lvg rm, HWF's, skylights. Great area, located in the Dimond District.
Ken Nwokedi 899.6333~485.5119



MAXWELL PARK
2600 KINGSLAND AVENUE
3 residential units+ commercial. 2 of 3 apartments extensively remodeled. New windows throughout and new stucco on exterior. Perfect for owner occupant.
Tom Watson 339.8400~899.6364



UPPER GLENVIEW
1124 HOLLYWOOD #2
Spacious, well maintained 2bd/2ba condo in 4 unit complex. Extremely private, in great Glenview loc, min. from Montclair Village, easy SF commute.
Nahid Nassiri 339.8400~339.4550

WEST OAKLAND
1785-1787 9TH STREET
Gorgeous Victorian duplex. Taste fully remodeled. New int/ext paint, HWF's, earthtuned tile, granite counters, SS appliances. Plans to expand!
Ken Nwokedi 899.6320~485.5110



PACHECO
388 PANTANO
Lovely updated 3bd/2.5ba townhome with upgrades galore. Located in quiet Pantano community w/ lots of amenities including 2 car attached garage.
Pamela Finney 339.8400~899.6326

OAKLAND
1308-1310 96TH AVENUE
Duplex currently used as a SFR. 2bd/1ba up & 2bd/1ba down. Recently updated, formal living & dining room, 3 bonus rooms. Newer dual paned windows.
Ken Nwokedi 899.6333~485.5119

ROCKRIDGE
2005 PLEASANT VALLEY, #313
Elegant top-floor condo across from Rockridge Center! Well run complex w/ year round heated pool, gym, sauna, low fees. Hwd flrs, + room in unit.
Jim Schubert 339.8400~339.4550

Commercial

MILLSMONT
3571 66TH AVE.
Millmont Areal 9 unit apartment building w/ six 2 bd/1 ba units & one 3bd/1 ba units on 9,344 sq ft lot. income producer. 102K gross income.
Ken Nwokedi 339.4000~485.5110

OAKLAND
4715 TO 4717 FOOTHILL BLVD
2 Commercial spaces/struc. located in currently leased as a barber salon. 4717 was used as a restaurant. Great location.
Ken Nwokedi 339.4000~485.5110

DOWNTOWN OAKLAND
2545-2555 BROADWAY
2 retail spaces for lease. 2555 Broadway 3480 sq ft, 33480/month. 2545 Broadway 7500 sq ft, \$8000/month. Zoning C-40, exc Broadway location!
Ken Nwokedi 899.6333~485.5110

BERKELEY
2380 TELEGRAPH AVE.
Retail space for sublease. Located in heart of the retail shopping district. 2 bldgs from UC campus. 12000 sq ft. Plenty of walk-by traffic.
Ken Nwokedi 899.6333~485.5110

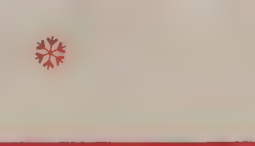
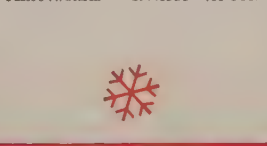
Coming Soon



OAKLAND
9929 CALODEN
Coming Soon! Gorgeous brand new 4br/3ba custom built home. Chabot Golf Course. Still under construction. 4000+/- sq ft. High ceilings. High quality finishes and appliances.
Ken Nwokedi 899.6333~485.5110

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

With best wishes
for a wonderful
holiday season
and a prosperous
new year.



www.MontclairBetterHomes.com

Heavens

FROM PAGE B6

you what things should look like. Before "This Old House" and HGTV, I often found it difficult to visualize the process. Most how-to books were just a lot of words, often in

need of a dictionary translation. As DIY shows proliferated, books like these two began including more step-by-step instructions and more detailed illustrations.

Here's a must-buy: "Reviving Your House: 500 Inexpensive and Simple Solutions to Basic Home Maintenance Issues" by Alan Dan

Orme (Storey Books, \$14.95). It will help you develop a checklist to keep your house whole.

Have questions for Alan J. Heavens? You can e-mail him at ahavens@phillynews.com or write to him at The Inquirer, Box 8263, Philadelphia 19101.

CONTACT THE REAL ESTATE EDITOR AT 510-748-1655

SOLD



1305 Henry Street, Berkeley
Represented the Buyers
Originally offered at \$678,000

*Happy
New Year
to All!*

SOLD



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Originally offered at \$459,000

PENDING



9 Woodside Glen, Oakland
Represented the Buyers
Offered at \$1,275,000

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Representing the Sellers
Offered at \$995,000

PENDING



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of the holiday season is
to say Thank You
for your real estate business
and wish you a happy,
healthy, prosperous new year.

Carol Heath-Kim
(510) 525-2346

El Cerrito



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Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy
& Safe New Year!

Thank You for Your Business
Tere Lee Real Estate Team

Tere Lee, CRS
(510) 346-4112



Happy Holidays
Thank You Friends, Family &
Clients for a prosperous year.
Please keep in touch.

Victoria Curtis
(510) 305-7775

El Cerrito



Wishing You Peace,
Health and
Happiness for the
New Year!

Leslie Avant
510-338-1341



May Peace, Joy and the Magic of the Holiday
Season be with you throughout the coming year.

Ruth Masonek, CRS, SRES
Certified Residential Specialist
(510) 748-1101



Peace, Joy & Good Health.
May every day be a
Holiday.

Jan Mason
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2514 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

May You Enjoy Good Health and Prosperity

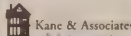
Rita Smith
REALTOR
(510) 525-3681



Wishing you and your family a
wonderful holiday season and a
healthy and peaceful New Year!

Lisa Lawley

Broker Associate, REALTOR
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(510) 865-2800

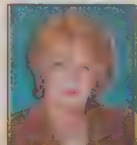


Best wishes for a
Happy & Healthy
New Year

Thank you for another
successful year.

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Warm Wishes for a Wonderful Holiday Season!

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2BD/2ba, Cov Parking, Yrd \$1k/mo, 1825 Oak Park Chris, 824-2888

2 WORLDS lg, 2BD/2.5ba fric, A/C, w/d, \$1500 925-938-5880

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2BD/1BA, 2 car gar, pool, patio, quiet, For more info & to view, 209-830-0930

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3BD/1.5BA + New cpt, hwd & win. cov, Applis, w/g, Avail, \$1750 925-551-8435

San Pablo Condos & Townhouses

3BD/2ba Rancho San Pablo, Nr CCC, applis, gar nosmk \$1500 1st/last +dep 510-799-7316

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4BD/2.5ba, Westside, avail, immed, 3rd story, short term ok \$2800 agt 925-837-7111

Antioch Homes

4BD/2.5ba, Mandarin Wy, Move-in Ready, Sec 8 ok, 925-473-0352

3BA4 ROCKFORD Dr, 3bd/2.5ba spa, fric, gar, new cpt/tile, no pets, Nr schis, Move-in-ready, \$1800 + sec, 925-634-4252; 550-6228

3BD/2BA \$1450/mo, Big yd, New cpt/paint, 2 car gar, 925-518-8754

3BD/2BA 2101 Ruby Dr, Newly remod, fric, gar, No pets, Move-in-ready, \$1400 + sec, dep 925-634-4252; 925-628-9562

4BD/2ba, \$1675 nr, golf new, cpt/paint, new schis, 925-757-3775

Antioch Homes

4BD/2.5BA \$1800/mo, 1913st, Nr park, Sec 8 ok, 925-757-7404

BRAND new 4bd/2.5ba, + bonus, 2323st, grdn, \$2250 925-828-0718

Bay Point Homes

1BD Cottages, Nice, Nr Bart, 88 Madison ave, sect 8 ok, 925-965-8266

Bethel Island Homes

2BD/1BA REMODELED On water, dock avail, \$1175 408-354-9222

Brentwood Homes

3BD/2BA 2100sf, Huge fam. rm, 1 year lease, 3 car gar, \$1800 + dep, Like new, December Rent Free 925-634-4025

3BD/2BA, Nice bkyd, nonsmk, nr pool, pets ok \$1700 925-519-1648

3BD/2BA Shadow lakes Patio, garage & spa, \$1900/mo 510-847-3721

3BD/2 full ba, 2 car gar, no HOA, pets ok, dog run \$1575 925-240-6216

4BD/2BA, 1.5ac, all chainlink fence, as-phail driveway, dbl gar, \$1650 mo+ dep, Call Bill 925-634-3420

5BD/3BA new, 3100 sf, close to all, \$2600 + dep, 925-584-5113

B+D/4BA Exec, Style 3300sf, golf/view, some util, grdn, \$2900 Owner 800-886-4278

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Concord Homes

2BD/1ba, yd \$1295; 3bd/2ba, pool, Crestwood \$1795, 825-736-4800

3BD/2BA, \$1950 925-685-7746; www.2313stgeorgedrive.com

3BD/2BA end of Ct, RV prking, 2 car, new cpt, 925-825-3578; 345-1119

4BD/2ba, avail, approx, 2/20, \$1900/mo., no sec. 8, 925-682-8271

4BD/2BA, remod., A/C, nice area, \$1700, 925-676-8818; 925-360-2570

Danville Homes

2BD/1BA \$1425 GREAT location near down-town, No smkg, No pets, Avail, now! 925-820-8935

4BD/3ba + office, near Blackhawk \$3600, 925-362-0394

5BD/3BA, X fr Greenbit, in Greenboro, \$3000 inc. wtr/garb/grdn, 750-214-1548

BEAUTIFUL hme, across from park, 1BD+den, plenty of parking, \$1500 all util incl 925-837-8845 anytime

Discovery Bay Homes

LAKEs New 400/3ba w/sunrm 3 car garage \$2100/mo 6281 Crystal Springs 925-362-4680

THE Lakes Lease to own 4bd incl jr, suite 3.5bath New home 3car gar \$2100 925-362-4680

Dublin Homes

3BD/2BA, \$1650, Avail, 1/1, Open on Sat, 12/31 10-12 & Sun 1/1 2-4, 7603 Donohoe Dr.

5BD/1BA 2 liv, hwd, new bth, w/d, ref, \$2800/bd 925-833-8445

El Cerrito Homes

\$1900, El Cerrito Hills, 2bd/1ba, view, fric, din, rm, 2 car garage + workshop/studio, 2525 Nason Ave 510-212-2901

El Sobrante Homes

3BD/1.5BA \$1550 No pets, sect 8 ok \$10-236-6858 510-233-2361

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Lafayette Homes

3BD/1BA, Florence Dr, \$1500/mo, + deposit, Call 925-284-4526

3BD/2BA, lg, fam, rm., 2500sf, 1007 Windsor Dr \$3300, 925-876-8884

Livermore Homes

\$1250/mo, 2 BD/1 BA, garage, yard, newly re-mod, 925-447-6085

2BD 2 car, refig, w/d grt, loc gd cond \$1395 Vacant, 925-371-2108

3BD/1.5BA + Fam Rm, 2 car gar, No smk/pets, \$1650 510-537-6753

Livermore Homes

3BD/2.5BA New yd, 4bd, 3b7c, fric, lower Dr, \$1700 925-200-6147

3BD/2BA - SOUTH SIDE super clean, A/C, patio \$1695 925-946-3949

4BD/2BA, big bkyd Nr schi, A/C, new, hwbv \$1800 925-606-8943

Martinez Homes

3BD/2.5BA 2 car gar, cur, AC, heat, \$1500, 2078 Marzetti, By appt, 925-899-9078

NEW 3bd/2ba \$1550, 2bd/2ba \$1450, A/C, fric, No pets, 8 no dogs, 925-735-1863

Oakland Homes

3BD/2BA Montclair hm, Vnux, p.t, dock, fric, your + kn, pets ok \$1100 Pet no vrm, 510-363-9393, Laurel.

3BD/2BA Quiet, 4gar, well kept home, Redwood trees over large fenced yard, beautiful views, W/D, Skylights, Nice kitchen & carport \$2600 Lease, Avail Jan 28th 510-532-4930

Oakley Homes

1BD/1BA Big bkyd, 1/250 mo to mo 925-740-0011

(2) 3BD Homes, \$1250 & \$1350, No smkg no pets, 925-625-5775

3BD/2BA, \$1595 + dep, No sect, 8, Short term avail, 925-679-8239

3BD/2BA 3 car gar, W/D, refig, \$1575+ dep, 101-590-6169

3BD/2BA Immaculate, gardn, W/D, ref, \$1475, 510-715-3800

3BD/2BA, Remod 1st mo, Free w/ 2 yr lease lg family rm, 2 story home on wtr front, \$1500/mo + \$1900 sec, Birth incl, 925-684-3522; 684-8681

Oakley Homes

4BD/3BA Huge kit, Nice yd, sec 8 ok \$2000, 510-908-0056

6BD/3BA New hm 3 car gar, 1100 sf, \$2300/mo 925-500-7889

Patterson Homes

3BD/2BA Rent to Own 2200 sq ft, Den, fam, rm, LARGE kit 3 car gar, \$2000 925-200-1368

Pinole Homes

2BD/2BA, gd, noc, close to schis/shops, \$1725 + dep, 510-685-2380

3BD/2BA Hill View 1 car gar, Move in cond, frnt/bkyd, \$1775 510 & last, 510-662-8582

Pittsburg Homes

3BD/2BA, 2 car gar, Nr fwy, schi, shops, \$1500 925-305-6264

4BD/2.5BA 1 yr old, great loc, Sect 8 ok New apt, \$1,800 925-367-9029

PITTSBURG 4BD, 2BA, 3 car garage, beautiful home for rent (925) 207-2505

Pleasant Hill Homes

\$2150, 3BD/2BA, 3091 Diablo View Rd, Lp, yd 1 car gar, Applis, gardn, wtr, No pets, No smkg, 925-207-2217

3bd/1ba remod Open Sect 11-1, \$1750, 2461 Marcla 510-713-8834

4BD/1.5BA REMODI AC, nice bkyd, \$2100 925-965-0762

Pleasanton Homes

4BD/2.5BA, 3 car gar, gardn, \$1900, RR Rentals 925-734-0400

4BD/2ba, clean, spg level, AC, quiet area \$2100, 925-918-1059

Pleasanton Homes

4BD/2.5BA, pool & spa, wetbar, fric, Pido, central A/C, gardn, fric, Ac, Nosmk, No pets, \$2550, 925-382-3836

4 BD/2, BA, Val Vista Fresh & clean 1 fl, ac \$2100 Agt 510-881-7000

4BD/3BA, 2 car garage, W/D, pet, Den, fam, rm, \$2600/mo, Call HRES at 925-417-7900

6875 VIA QUITO, 4BD/2BA, Spacious & clean, Nonsmk, No pets \$1950/mo, 925-398-8078/925-963-7214

REMODELED 3BD/2BA, 2car gar, w/d, ref, grt loc, \$2K/mo, Call HRES 925-317-7900

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2BD/1BA 1 car gar, 1st, 510 Chansford \$995, 510-543-8890

3BD/1BA, completely updated, aw new, huge bkyd, gd area, nr BART \$1550, 431-4460, 510-375-0182

3BD/2ba, rancher Village \$1300 + \$1000 dep, Cred, report req, see also 510-237-0911

3BD tile flrs, Quiet stove, Refrig, Sec 8 ok, 5-26th \$1495, 925-754-8863

4BD/2.5ba Hilltop, 2car gar, deck, mstr, suite \$1950 510-815-4884

4BD/2.5BA Hilltop, Sec 8 OK, \$2100 + sec, deposit, 415-517-0173

4BD/2BA Sect. 8 ok, \$1700/mo, Call 707-365-8963

4BD/3BA, newer, 6 ml, to Orinda BART, grdn, \$2795, 925-828-0718

Rodeo Homes

3BD/1BA Bright hm, 1st, str, 1.5mo dep, pet ok, \$1750 510-758-7296

San Pablo Homes

3BD/2BA 3 yr \$1650-1st/last For details 510-758-5637 X 621

San Pablo Homes

4BD/2BA Exec, \$1900/mo, 1st, 925-709-1210; 709-2949

San Ramon Homes

3BD/2BA Features on Lake Cragside, \$1750, 925-376-3887

4BD/2BA, Updated, well mnt, grt r, nonsmk, no pets, \$2150, 925-216-1517

4BD/3ba New, never lived in, Windsor ave \$3295, 925-640-5991

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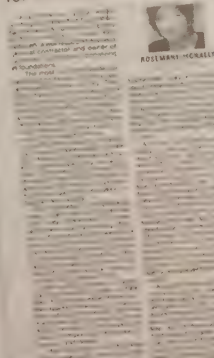
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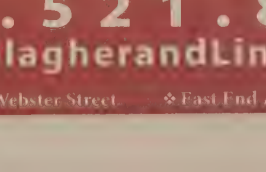
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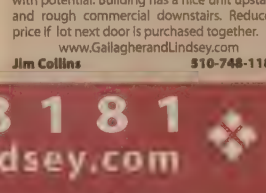
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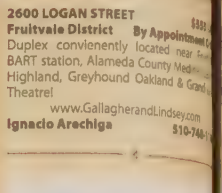


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OAKLAND



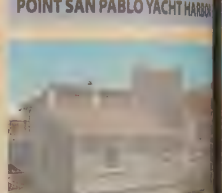
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Around the horn

Jamboree returns to Piedmont

■ Piedmont High School is the site again for the second annual Martin Luther King Jr. Jamboree. The showcase features six boys basketball games Jan. 16 at William "Binks" Rawlings Gym. The matchups are Amador Valley vs. Rancho Cotati-Rohnert Park at noon, Oakland vs. Hercules at 1:30 p.m., Richmond vs. Casa Grande-Petaluma at 3 p.m., Berkeley vs. Clovis East at 4:30 p.m., Piedmont vs. El Molino-Forestville at 6 p.m. and St. Joseph Notre Dame vs. Marin Catholic-Kentfield at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults and \$3 for children. All proceeds benefit the Piedmont High School boys basketball program.

— Dave Carpenter

Gauchos like Arizona

■ For the second straight year, the El Cerrito High School girls basketball team has won a division title at the Nike Tournament of Champions in Arizona. In 2004, the Gauchos defeated Desert Vista-Phoenix 54-52 in the Gold Division championship game. Last week, El Cerrito beat West-Bakersfield 59-38 to win the Gray Division of the Nike TOC. El Cerrito was the only Northern California school to win one of the six division titles this year.

— Phil Jensen

Calling former soccer players

■ The Alameda High School boys soccer program is looking for former boys soccer players to participate in the its alumni game at 6 p.m. tonight at Thompson Field. Interested players are asked to show up before the game to participate.

— Robert Jordan

On Deck

■ Girls soccer, Piedmont at Berean Christian, Wednesday, 3:30 p.m. — The Highlanders return to Bay Shore Athletic League play against the team that has given them the best competition. Piedmont is in first place with a 6-0 record (18 points). Berean Christian is at 4-0-2 (14 points), good for second place. The Highlanders and Eagles were the top two teams in the BSAL last season, with Piedmont winning the league title.

■ Boys basketball, St. Elizabeth at Piedmont, Tuesday, 7 p.m. — It's the league debut for the Highlanders (8-2), who are just three wins away from matching last season's total. Piedmont was 11-15 last season, including 3-9 in the BSAL. A more experienced Highlanders squad has higher hopes this year.

■ Girls basketball, Piedmont at St. Elizabeth, Tuesday, 7 p.m. — Defense of the BSAL championship starts for Piedmont. The Highlanders no longer have Ashley and Courtney Paris to lead them, however. Instead, point guard Casey Morris and small forward Chazny Morris likely will lead the Highlanders, who went 9-3 in nonleague play.

■ Girls basketball, Pinole Valley at Alameda, Friday, 7 p.m. — The Hornets open up Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League play against the defending league champion Spartans. Pinole Valley won both games last year by a combined 16 points. As of Dec. 28 the Spartans were 8-0 on the season, while the Hornets were 5-4.

■ Boys basketball, St. Joseph at St. Mary's, Tuesday, 7 p.m. — The Pilots and Panthers met three times last season with St. Mary's winning two of those games, including a 59-43 win in the first round of the BSAL playoffs on Feb. 24.

■ Boys soccer, Berkeley at Encinal, Tuesday, 5 p.m. — The Jets will look to get back on track in ACCAL play after dropping a 5-0 decision to Richmond on Dec. 15. Berkeley also is looking for a win after having its Dec. 15 game with Pinole Valley postponed and dropping a 3-1 game to Alameda on Dec. 13.

Stars of the week

■ Chazny Morris, Piedmont girls basketball — Morris led the Highlanders with 20 points as they won the fifth-place game of the Nike TOC's Gray Division, 59-55 over Deer Valley in Chandler, Ariz.

■ Megan Jurado, Piedmont girls soccer — Jurado scored four goals and had an assist as Piedmont shut out Ygnacio Valley 5-0 in a Tri-Valley Classic Maroon Division game at Campolindo High School.

■ Samantha Vaughn, St. Joseph girls basketball — Vaughn had a team-high 16 points in the Pilots' 47-35 opening-round loss to Convent of the Sacred Heart-S.F. in the first round of the Agate Division of the sixth annual West Coast Jamboree on Wednesday.

■ Anthony Alvarez, Alameda boys soccer — Alvarez had 11 saves in the Hornets' 2-0 loss to Foothill at the Winter Soccer Classic Tournament on Dec. 20.

■ Will Brew, St. Mary's boys basketball — Brew had a team-high 19 points and grabbed seven rebounds in the Panthers' 74-59 win over Berkeley in the Salesian-Pinole Valley Holiday Classic. He also had a game-high 21 points in St. Mary's 68-45 victory over Lathrop-Alaska in the first round of the Cactus Jam in Tempe, Ariz.

■ D.J. Bagsby, Berkeley boys basketball — Bagsby led all scorers with 24 points and passed for four assists in the Yellow Jackets' 74-59 loss to St. Mary's in the Salesian-Pinole Valley Holiday Classic.

■ Myleka Emerson, El Cerrito girls basketball — Emerson scored a career-high 31 points and also had seven rebounds and two steals as the Gauchos defeated West-Bakersfield 59-38 in the championship game of the Gray Division in the Nike Tournament of Champions in Arizona. She also had 15 points in the Gauchos' 51-49 victory over St. Mary's-Ontario, Canada, in the semifinals.

NCS talent gap is almost gone

■ More girls basketball teams are catching up with Berkeley on the court

By Robert Jordan

STAFF WRITER

The walls at Berkeley High School's old gym don't have to talk because the banners hanging at the south end say enough.

For the past 16 seasons, the Yellow Jackets girls basketball team has owned East Bay competition, winning 13 of the last 16 North Coast Section titles, six California Interscholastic Federation Northern Regional championships and two CIF state titles.

But in the past two seasons, the landscape in the East Bay has changed, and it has nothing to do with Berkeley taking any steps backward.

What has happened is the rest of

WINNING WAYS

■ The following are the top girls basketball programs in the region based on winning percentage over the past 10 seasons:

- BERKELEY: 254-64, 80 percent
- NORTHGATE: 228-62, 79 percent
- CARONDELET: 225-68, 77 percent
- AMADOR VALLEY: 223-70, 76 percent
- ACALANES: 230-72, 76 percent

■ CAMPOLINDO: 212-85, 71 percent

■ MONTE VISTA: 203-81, 71 percent

■ MIRAMONTE: 194-91, 68 percent

■ BEREAN CHRISTIAN: 158-91, 63 percent

■ PITTSBURG: 165-107, 61 percent

■ SAN RAMON VALLEY: 151-98, 61 percent

— Records from staff archives

the East Bay has taken a few steps forward to close the gap.

"The competition has risen," Berkeley coach Gene Nakamura said. "There is a lot of parity, and the level of coaches has gotten better, and there are a lot of good young coaches."

For the past 23 seasons, Nakamura

has been one of the best, racking up more than 500 wins with the Yellow Jackets.

However, for the first time in nine seasons, Berkeley didn't win an NCS title in 2005. And for the first time in a decade, the Yellow Jackets lost six games to East Bay opponents, more than the past six seasons combined.

But how did the rest of the East Bay close the gap on the Yellow Jackets?

"There is a lot more opportunity for girls to play now," said Pinole Valley coach Dan O'Shea, whose team beat Berkeley twice last season, including his first victory on the Yellow Jackets' home floor in his 20-year tenure with the Spartans. "Girls (basketball), when I first started coaching at Pinole Valley, was pretty non-competitive and not one of the major sports. That has changed."

This week, the East Bay has showcased its talent in the sixth annual West Coast Jamboree.

Some of the most successful programs in the region, such as Amador Valley, Berkeley, Campolindo, Carondelet, Deer Valley, El Cerrito, Miramonte, Northgate and Pinole Valley, are competing in the 140-team, 17-bracket tournament.

See BASKETBALL, Page 2

GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Gauchos roll in the desert

By Robert Jordan

STAFF WRITER

The El Cerrito High School girls basketball team's man-to-man defense held West-Bakersfield to five first-half points, and guard Myleka Emerson took care of the scoring with a game-high 31 points as the Gauchos beat the Vikings 59-38 in the championship game of the Gray Division at the Nike Tournament of Champions in Chandler, Ariz., on Dec. 22.

"They played some defense," El Cerrito coach Ron Williams said. "It was good to see. It was one of the efforts I was looking for. I knew they had it in them."

It was the second time in two seasons that El Cerrito (6-1) won the Nike tournament. Last season, the Gauchos beat Desert Vista-Phoenix 54-52 to capture the Gold Division.

Shonetta Crain-Williams added eight points and 11 rebounds and Christina Nance and Destiny McGill each had five rebounds for the Gauchos.

El Cerrito 51, St. Mary's-Ontario, Canada 49: Crain-Williams scored a game-high 17 points and had 10 rebounds to help the Gauchos beat the Eagles in the Gray Division semifinals of the Nike TOC on Dec. 21. Emerson added 15 points for El Cerrito, which led by 10 points at one point before holding off a St. Mary's rally.

West-Bakersfield 56, Berkeley 42: For the first 2:45 of the game, it looked like the Yellow Jackets (3-4) would rout the Vikings in the first round of the Platinum Division in the West Coast Jamboree on Tuesday. But Berkeley, which jumped to a 6-0 lead in the quarter, was outscored 16-3 over the final 5:15 in the loss at Diablo Valley College.

Berkeley had no answer for West's Stephanie Madden. A 6-foot-1 center, Madden finished with a game-high 22 points, including 18 in the first half. Madden helped the Vikings jump to a 32-22 halftime lead.

Kandice Stewart came off the bench to lead the Yellow Jackets with seven points.

"We didn't come out and hustle like we should have," said Stewart, whose team cut the lead to seven with 2:00 left in the game. "They just hustled and we didn't."

The Yellow Jackets were held to 10 points each in the third and fourth quarter.

SOCCER

St. Mary's 4, Freedom 0: Sophia Darke scored one goal and assisted on two more by Kristen White as the Panthers captured third place in the Tri-Valley Classic Maroon Division at Campolindo on Friday.

White and Darke began their magic in the 14th minute when the latter fed the former for the game's first score. Kim Clincy added a second goal 12 minutes later with help from Avila Reed.

St. Mary's (4-3-1) continued dominating in the second half. Darke scored with help from Akela Grow at 64 minutes before

See GIRLS, Page 2



ST. MARY'S Will Brew, left, brings the ball up court as Berkeley's Peter Lucas pressures him.

Panthers too much for young Yellow Jackets

By Chace Bryson

STAFF WRITER

Sloppy, brilliant, composed or erratic. St. Mary's High School boys basketball coach Manny Nodar isn't sure which adjective is going to fit his team from quarter to quarter.

On Dec. 22, the good descriptions outweighed the bad as the Panthers defeated a young, struggling Berkeley team 74-59 in the Salesian-Pinole Valley Holiday Classic showcase at Cal's Haas Pavilion.

"With so many young players, we're still finding ourselves," said Nodar, whose roster features just three seniors. "We've got 10 new guys so we're basically starting from square one. But tonight was a good step for us."

The Yellow Jackets (2-5) opened the game on a 7-2 run but then went scoreless for more than six minutes. St. Mary's took an 8-7 lead with 1:09 left in the first quarter and never trailed again.

"This was a big win for us," Panthers sophomore Will Brew said. "I think the key was that we just had to relax. Some of us have been a little too timid on offense (so far), so it was good tonight that we were able to pick up the tempo and just relax and play ball."

BOYS HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

The Panthers (6-3) led by as much as 13 in the first half before settling for a 30-20 lead at the break.

However, the youth of St. Mary's showed early in the third quarter. The Panthers committed four turnovers in the first three minutes and Berkeley closed the gap to 39-35 on a pull-up jumper by Brian Guinn Jr. with 4:50 left in the period.

However, due in large part to Brew and Ryan Bremond, the Panthers were able to rebuild their lead and hold off the Yellow Jackets down the stretch. Brew and Bremond combined for 26 points in the second half, including eight from Bremond in the fourth quarter. Brew finished with a team-high 19 points. Bremond finished with 17 points and 13 rebounds.

Berkeley's D.J. Bagsby led all scorers with 25 points and added four assists.

St. Mary's 68, Lathrop-Alaska 45: The Panthers (7-3 at press time) outscored Lathrop 19-2 in the third quarter to take control in the first round of the Cactus Jam at Scottsdale

Christian High School in Tempe, Ariz. Brew scored a game-high 21 points in the win, and Bremond had a double-double with 10 points and 10 rebounds. Rolando Oliver also had 13 points and seven steals for the Panthers.

Novato 57, Albany 54: The visiting Cougars (3-9) rallied in the fourth quarter but were edged in this nonleague game on Friday. Josh Olson paced Albany in scoring with 12 points. Eric Roberson added 10 points for the Cougars.

Richmond 80, Albany 55: The visiting Oilers took a 28-11 first quarter lead on their way to the nonleague victory on Dec. 21. Kevin Karera paced the Cougars in scoring with 15 points.

SOCCER

St. Mary's 3, Livermore 1: Miles Hadley produced a hat trick for the Panthers (4-4) in this Silver Division Winter Soccer Classic game on Dec. 21 at Amador Valley. After Livermore's Leopoldo Morales scored the game's first goal at the seven-minute mark, Hadley scored twice in the next eight minutes and three times in the first half.

Staff writer Phil Jensen contributed to this roundup.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

To submit an item to the What's Happening calendar, e-mail sports@cttimes.com to request a form. Put "What's Happening" in the subject line. Nonprofit organizations only. You may be asked to submit a copy of your 1099 or 501(c)3 to verify nonprofit status. Entries are edited for content and are published as space is available.

BASKETBALL

■ **EBBA Powerhouse** — Tryouts for Pinole-based team, ages 9-10, Dec. 31, 11 a.m., at Fernandez Park in Pinole. 510-691-2049 or e-mail darrellardjr@yahoo.com.

FOOTBALL

■ **Contra Costa College Reunion** — Jan.

SOFTBALL

■ **Alameda Girls Softball Association** — Online registration for spring season, ages 5-14, through Jan. 31 at alamedagirls.com. \$105 for 6U; \$125 for ages 7-14. Late fee after Jan. 15. 510-287-9465.

■ **Pinole Valley Spring Break JV Tournament** — Registration for teams for April tour-

■ **Oakland Softball** — Seeking adult volunteers to coach teams. 510-339-7268 or visit ogsl.org.

■ **Albany/Berkeley Girls Softball League** — Seeking girls, grades 1-9, for season running March-June. Early registration ends Dec. 31 and closes Feb. 1. Visit abgsl.org. 510-869-4277 or e-mail, registrar@abgsl.org.

See CALENDAR, Page 2

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL POLL

Rank	School	Record	Comment
1.	De La Salle	4-0	Spartans' week off could spell trouble for field at Torrey Pines tourney
2.	Tennyson	9-0	Unbeaten run continues with convincing wins over Albany, Petaluma
3.	San Leandro	5-1	Pirates edge Archbishop Mitty 53-51 to leapfrog Titans
4.	Skyline	9-1	Eight-point loss to Mitty doesn't hurt too badly
5.	Foothill	7-1	Falcons ring up solid wins over James Logan, Castro Valley
6.	Campolindo	7-3	Even coach Whirlow's balky appendix can't keep Cougars from winning
7.	Deer Valley	7-3	Wolverines bounce back from loss to Jesuit with three straight wins
8.	Kennedy	9-1	Posts 82-77 double-overtime nonleague win over De Anza
9.	Castlemont	6-3	Inexperience exposed in back-to-back losses for young Knights
10.	San Ramon Valley	7-3	Wolves avenge one-point loss to Las Lomas with one-point win

Others receiving votes: Berean Christian (8-0), Antioch (8-1), Las Lomas (8-2). The boys basketball poll incorporates all East Bay high schools and is compiled by the staff of Contra Costa Newspapers. Records are through Dec. 21.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL POLL

Rank	School	Record	Comment
1.	Pinole Valley	8-0	Last week, Spartans outscored two opponents 135-51
2.	Carondelet	4-1	Appel rolling toward another MVP-caliber season
3.	El Cerrito	5-1	Fewer opportunities to practice don't slow Gauchos
4.	Piedmont	7-3	Sister Act 2 starring the Morris siblings in its sixth week of release
5.	Deer Valley	5-2	Hard to believe Erica Helms was a role player at St. Mary's-Stockton
6.	Washington	8-1	Huskies claim own tournament title, win fifth straight game
7.	Berkeley	3-3	Backcourt is back; bad news for the rest of the North Coast Section
8.	Granada	7-2	Undefeated run ends with pair of losses at Nike TOC
9.	Miramonte	5-2	Matadors stop two-game slide with win over Ursuline-Santa Rosa
10.	St. Patrick	8-2	Bruins ready to challenge Piedmont for BSAL crown

Others receiving votes: San Ramon Valley (7-2). The girls basketball poll incorporates all East Bay high schools and is voted on by the staff of Contra Costa Newspapers. Records are through Dec. 21.

Basketball

FROM PAGE 1

Dave Jackson, director of the jamboree, has seen the transition firsthand.

"Coaches are the biggest change," Jackson said. "Gene proved that girls basketball was something people could be proud of."

The emergence of Amateur Athletic Union basketball is one avenue that has helped fuel the growth of girls basketball.

Deer Valley's first-year coach, Lindsey Lopez, is a product of the AAU scene. A 2000 Deer Valley graduate, Lopez had to travel to San Jose and Marin to play AAU.

"Now, (at Deer Valley) the team is good, and we are not losing kids to private schools," said Lopez, who also played basketball at St. Mary's College. "The program is established, and kids in the area are not saying, 'I have to drive to Carondelet.'"

Brad Thomas and Ed Ruiz, two veteran coaches at Alameda

High School, are credited with helping the AAU scene expand in the East Bay. In 1985, they started the North Coast Express, one of the first local AAU girls teams.

Since that point, AAU teams have started throughout the Bay Area.

"More young women are now playing more," Ruiz said. "It used to be girls were not playing and there were no avenues like open gyms. Now girls are seeing the best competition."

Better competition means more high school programs are keeping their players.

But building a program isn't an easy task. It requires countless hours not just on practices and games, but fund raising, as well.

Also, most of the successful programs field coaches who have been there at least five years. If they haven't, they've still had success at some other school.

El Cerrito's Ron Williams is entering his seventh season with the Gauchos. Last season was his best at El Cerrito, as the team finished 24-1 and came within eight points of an NCS Division III ti-

tle.

"I just figured it was only a matter of time," said Williams about girls basketball advancing in the East Bay. "I saw it seven years ago. I saw the athletes and programs finally started getting coaches in there."

With all the success there has been a down side.

Despite the level of competition going up and parity spreading throughout the leagues, Nakamura has seen a decrease in fundamentals.

"With the creation of pro women's basketball there is a lot more hype on playing," Nakamura said. "The growth of AAU teams has the level of play better, but the fundamental level is down."

But don't get Nakamura wrong; he and assistant coaches Herbert Miller and Chris Hope look forward to the increase in competition.

"It's good, we enjoy the competition," Hope said. "We love competition, and I know Gene hates to not have a first-round game (in NCS). We want our kids to enjoy the whole process."

Approach ice with caution

FROZEN PONDS can be a major part of winter recreation, with skating and ice fishing ranking among favorite activities. But the potential for danger is ever present.

So when outdoors, take a hard look at the ice before you leap. Clear blue ice is an indication that the ice is strong and firm.

The ice should be at least three inches thick to support a single person, and five to six inches to support a group of people or a snowmobile. Theoretically, you can venture out onto thinner ice if you distribute your weight over a wider area with skis or snowshoes. But who wants to risk that?

Ice is too inconsistent: Milky, honeycombed ice that has air bubbles or snow crystals trapped in it is much weaker and less trustworthy than clear blue ice. Water currents under the ice or springs can create weaker spots.

Snow cover complicates things with ice. Not only does it keep you from visually checking the ice for inconsistencies, it also insulates and inhibits ice formation. So be doubly careful before venturing out onto a snow-covered pond or lake.

The only way to be certain how thick ice is, of course, is



MIKE GALE
Recreation

to cut a hole in it with a chisel or auger. Start near shore and make several test cuts as you go out. Remember that ice thickness isn't consistent, water currents (particularly around narrow spots, bridges, inlets and outlets) are always suspect. Never trust the ice on a river or stream — it can be several feet thick in one place, and unsafe only a short distance away. On really cold days, you are likely to hear the ice rumbling and ping-pong. Sometimes you'll even see long cracks developing.

But if the ice is thick enough to hold you safely, don't panic. The rumbling and cracking are the sound of pressure being relieved as more ice forms beneath the surface. If you find yourself on the ice and it starts to break, stop, drop and roll until you are on thicker ice.

For steady footing, a pair of

ice cleats on your boots are great. Ice awls also come handy if you know how to use them. For instance, if you're through the ice, you could use the picks to grab the ice and kick under water and pull yourself out, but don't stand on it if you're sure the ice is firm enough.

Stay away from areas where there's a current or water change such as rivers, streams and reservoirs. Watch for dark areas that reveal places where the ice is thin. It's a good idea to avoid areas with logs, brush or docks sticking from the ice. These areas weaken the ice around them.

Keep in mind that a person does get out of the water, the cold still can be dangerous and cause hypothermia.

Hypothermia, which is fatal, is caused when your body's core temperature drops. This quickly causes confusion, disorientation and rigid muscles. Eventually, speech comes slurred, shivering stops, but breathing will weaken in the end ... unconscious.

Contact Mike Gale at mgale@ccnnews.com or by calling 2540 Shadelands Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.

Girls

FROM PAGE 1

assisting on White's second goal five minutes later.

Scottie Meinke played the entire game in goal for St. Mary's, finishing with seven saves.

St. Mary's 3, Ygnacio Valley 2: White scored the game-winning goal in the 71st minute off

a pass from Clincy in this Tri-Valley Classic Maroon Division game at Miramonte on Dec. 22. White had two goals in the game, and Darke had the team's other goal.

Miramonte 1, St. Mary's 0: Meinke had six saves for the Panthers, but the Matadors' Bonnie Zeiger scored at the 54th minute to win this Tri-Valley Classic Maroon Division game at

Miramonte on Dec. 22.

Amador Valley 0, Berkeley 1: The Yellow Jackets' Laura Lamm had four saves in the shutout of a Gold Division game of the Valley Classic at Campolindo on Dec. 21.

Staff writers Mike McGraw and Phil Jensen contributed to this roundup.

Calendar

FROM PAGE 1

JOBS

■ **Springwood Swim Team** — Accepting applications for experienced and organized assistant swim coach for swimmers ages 4-18. Job runs April-August, 2006. Denise Lowe, 925-439-8070, or e-mail, den5675297@aol.com.

■ **St. Joseph Notre Dame** —

Coaching vacancies for following spring sports: head boys varsity volleyball; head boys and girls varsity swimming; assistant varsity track and field; head junior varsity baseball; and head junior varsity softball. Dan Curry, 510-814-7146, or e-mail, dcurry@sjnd.org.

■ **Campolindo High School** — Seeking following spring coaching positions: head varsity and junior varsity girls lacrosse; diving; and head junior varsity boys volleyball. Bob Wilson, 925-280-3950, Ext. 5235, or e-

mail, bwilson@acalanes.k12ca.us.

■ **Carondelet High School** — Accepting applications for following coaching vacancies: varsity and freshman softball assistants; coach for track and field. Glenn Green, 925-686-5353, Ext. 18, e-mail, ggreen@carondelet.org.

■ **Wilson Prep** — Seeking varsity and junior varsity football assistant coaches; and head junior varsity ball coach for Oakland school. Deb Bissa, 415-652-7726, or e-mail, bissa.roseby@asprieprep.com.

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Ask the expert:

What should I do before taking a winter road trip?

We advise taking your car into the repair shop if it has not been serviced in the last 6 months. It's a good idea to have the engine oil and filter changed, other fluids checked and topped up and a safety inspection performed which would assess the brake and tire conditions. The number one reason for highway accidents is due to failing brakes or tires, resulting in loss of vehicle control. Engine coolant should be tested if you are traveling to areas that freeze. Before you begin your family road trip be sure your vehicle is equipped with these safety items: water for drinking, blankets, cell phone and car charger for emergencies, tire chains (if traveling to an area where it might snow), road flares or reflector triangles and a first aid kit. Remember entertainment for the kids. Busy kids are happy kids leaving the adults more time for navigating the roads. Check your car's spare tire. Make sure the spare tire is there and that it's in good condition. Spares tend to loose air overtime and sometimes the rubber dry-rots. Test your windshield wipers and washers. Make sure the wiper blades are sweeping smoothly across the windshield. Have your blades replaced if they are over a year old. There should be no evidence of streaking or skipping. Cleaning the windshield with isopropyl alcohol is great for removing that oily coating that causes good blades to smear or jump. Washers must squirt onto the windshield in places that allow the blades to carry the fluid.

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NOW PLAYING

Below are capsule reviews of movies playing at area theaters. Reviewers are Mary F. Pols, Randy Myers, Times; Robert W. Butler, Chris Hewitt, Steven Rase, Carrie Rickney and Rene Rodriguez, Knight Ridder; Bruce Newman, San Jose Mercury News; David Garmain, Christine Lemire, Associated Press; Bob Longino, Cox News Service; Anita Gales, Dave Kehr, Laura Kern, A.O. Scott, New York Times; Jani Bernard and Jack Matthews, New York Daily News; David Kronke, Bob Strauss, Glenn Whipp, Los Angeles Daily News; Carina Ciociano, Kevin Crust, Manolia Dargis, Kevin Thomas and Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times; Ed Bark, Nancy Churnin, Gary Dowell, Chris Vognar and Philip Winton, Dallas Morning News; Jay Boyar and Roger Moore, Orlando Sentinel; Carla Meyer, Sacramento Bee; Ty Burr and Wesley Morris, Boston Globe; Steve Persall, St. Petersburg Times; Curt Fields, Ann Hornaday, Stephen Hunter, Philip Kennicott, Michael O'Sullivan and Desson Thomson, Washington Post; Hanh Nguyen, Zap2.com.

"AEON FLUX": This good-looking, empty-headed, empty-headed sci-fi failure takes us 400 years in the future, where a depopulated Earth is reduced to living in one big city. A "chairman" runs the show, and rebels are trying to kill him, with Aeon (Charlene Theron) the ace assassin. Joined up with Silthandra (Sophie Okonedo), Aeon must penetrate the leader's of-Bias and take him down. — R. Myers. (PG-13: sequences of violence, sexual content.) 1 hour, 26 minutes. C

"BALLETS RUSSES": In 1929, Serge Diaghilev, whose name is pretty much synonymous with ballet impresario, died in Venice. His passing left a void not only at his famed company, the Ballets Russes, but also in the larger world of dance. In this graceful and fascinating new documentary, Bay Area filmmakers Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine have put together an impeccable memorial to a perishable art form and a moving, invigorating elixir to the civilization that sustained it. — A.O. Scott. (Not rated.) 1 hour, 58 minutes. A-

"BREAKFAST ON PLUTO": Neil Jordan's strained bit of "fancy attempts to mix camp with earnestness. Told in 35 "chapters," the story follows Kitten, a stumpy-eyed cross-dresser, from boyhood, where his feminine proclivities

developed, to his early-1970s adult years, where our dreamer, now in the throes of glam rock, often intersects with Ireland's political tension of the time. — G. Whipp. (R: sexuality, language, some violence and drug use.) 2 hours, 15 minutes. C+

"BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN": Two cowboys fall unexpectedly in love in director Ang Lee's masterful ode to the West and romance. Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger play the men who find themselves impossibly attracted to each other while herding sheep on Brokeback Mountain, and form a clandestine relationship that lasts 20 years. Everything about this beautiful and evocative film works, from the cast to the direction to the score. But Ledger is the standout as the taciturn Ennis, a man struggling to understand something that he simply can't. — R. Myers. (R: sexuality, nudity, language and some violence.) 2 hours, 14 minutes. A

"CAPOTE": Philip Seymour Hoffman shouldn't be the only name considered for an Oscar nomination in this rich and profound film about the making of a masterpiece and the undoing of a writer. Hoffman never misses a beat playing flamboyant author Truman Capote. The assured movie, from director Bennett Miller, follows the egomaniacal author through the process of writing his masterpiece, "In Cold Blood." Catherine Keener is exceptional as Capote's friend, and assistant, Harper Lee. — R. Myers. (R: some violent images and brief strong language.) 1 hour, 50 minutes. A

"CASANOVA": In this witty, romantic romp, our randy hero (Heath Ledger) meets the woman of his dreams while pretending to be someone else. The message is "Love conquers all," and while that's an odd message for a movie about one of history's biggest rakes, it's also a nice thought anytime we can get it. — C. Hewitt. (R: some sexual content.) 1 hour, 48 minutes. B

"CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2": Steve Martin and Bonnie Hunt are Tom and Kate, parents to 12 kids. In the original 2003 film, Tom and Kate try to decide whether to put their careers or their families first. In this sequel, the kids are growing up, and Dad is having a hard time adjusting to their departure from Chicago. So he tries to keep everyone together by taking one last family vacation by their favorite lake. The film's strengths, such as they are, lie in the appealing

performances of Martin as the anxious but loving dad and Hunt as the perfect, patient mom. — N. Churnin. (PG) 1 hour, 40 minutes. C

"CHICKEN LITTLE": Disney is marginally successful with this, the studio's first full-length computer animation movie made without any assistance from Emeryville-based Pixar. While the animation is quite good, the story winds up laying an egg. The sky does indeed fall on Chicken Little, unleashing aliens who wreak havoc on a Richard Scarry-like world called Oakey Oaks. The screenwriters run out of good ideas, so they resort to being a "War of the Worlds" clone with an occasional disco tune tossed in. That's really too bad, since the first half is charming, cute and holds promise. — R. Myers. (G) 1 hour, 27 minutes. B-

"THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE": The childlike wonderment we experienced when we first encountered the magical world of author C.S. Lewis is replicated in this enchanting adaptation of the first of a seven-book series. Four children living in England's countryside during WWII enter a wardrobe that takes them to a winter wonderland where an evil White Witch (Tilda Swinton) with killer fashion sense is in a tug-of-war with a majestic and virtuous lion (voiced by Liam Neeson). The film with Christian themes lags as it enters its more talky third final act, but "Narnia" casts quite a spell. Take the family and enjoy. — R. Myers. (PG: battle sequences, frightening moments.) 2 hours, 20 minutes. B+

"THE FAMILY STONE": In this warm, funny and smart film, Sarah Jessica Parker plays an uptight character in a premise many will relate to — meeting the in-laws, and how things get confusing when lots of people's feelings are involved. It's an unruly pile of dovetailing story lines that are surprising, complicated and genuine. Diane Keaton and Luke Wilson also star. — C. Hewitt. (PG-13: language, drug use.) 1 hour, 43 minutes. B+

"FUN WITH DICK AND JANE": Jim Carrey and Tea Leoni star in this remake of the 1977 George Seagal and Jane Fonda movie. The premise — an upper-middle-class couple turn to crime to maintain their lifestyle after losing their jobs — has tremendous potential as a satire of our consumerist society and our obsession with status. But the picture's primary

interest is giving Carrey a stage for his trademark over-the-top stylings. Even here, though, it disappoints, since the actor spends most of the picture in strangely muted mode. — R. Rodriguez. (PG-13: vulgar language, adult themes.) 1 hour, 30 minutes. D+

"GOING SHOPPING": In this idiosyncratic Henry Jaglom comedy, Holly (Victoria Foyle) is the proprietor of a trendy boutique. She's worked hard to establish the store, so it comes as a shock that she's about to lose her lease if she doesn't come up with \$40,000. Meanwhile, Holly learns the hard way that she has foolishly entrusted her finances to her smooth-talking lover. Walking out on him, she buckles down to meet the imminent deadline. — K. Thomas. (PG-13: strong language.) 1 hour, 46 minutes. B

"GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK": George Clooney directed, wrote and co-stars in this sharp black-and-white film about veteran newsmen Edward R. Murrow's tangle with anti-Communist fanatic Joseph McCarthy (wisely depicted in archival footage). The film both educates and entertains, reminding us of an important episode in history that resonates today. — R. Myers. (PG: mild thematic elements, brief language.) 1 hour, 33 minutes. A

"HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE": It smells an awful lot like teen spirit in the fourth installment of the phenomenal series about an orphaned boy with sorcerer abilities. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) grows up fast as he faces down a pack of vicious mermaids, fights an ill-tempered dragon and discovers the opposite sex. Director Mike Newell ("Four Weddings and a Funeral") makes "Goblet" way too scary for the little ones, but strikes a chord with the material, showing us the dark side of adolescence. — R. Myers. (PG-13: sequences of fantasy violence, frightening images.) 2 hours, 37 minutes. B

"THE ICE HARVEST": With the help of stars John Cusack and Billy Bob Thornton, director Harold Ramis ("Groundhog Day") offers a bitter alternative to holiday chestnuts such as "It's a Wonderful Life" and "The Santa Clause." Cusack and Thornton are in fine form as embezzlers who find their seemingly best-laid plans skidding out of control on Christmas Eve. "Harvest" should be better given the talent involved, but it does have a few nifty surprises and good performances. — R. Myers. (R: violence, language and

OPENING TODAY

"MUSIC FROM THE INSIDE OUT" (NR)
Daniel Anker's documentary uses

sexuality/nudity.) 1 hour, 28 minutes. B-

"IN THE MIX": Originally titled "Dying for Dolly," this lame romantic comedy starring singer Usher Raymond is indeed already flat on its back and ready for a toe tag. Usher plays a nightclub DJ who takes a bullet to protect a mob boss's family and becomes bodyguard to the man's daughter. Oh, and they fall for each other. — B. Longino. (PG-13: Sexual content, violence, language.) 1 hour, 35 minutes. D

"JARHEAD": Director Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") crafts a mostly successful stream-of-consciousness version of Anthony Swiffoff's much-acclaimed 2003 memoir about being a Marine sniper during the first Persian Gulf War. There are vivid and unforgettable sequences, and also bouts of Marines misbehaving in the desert, including a haunting sequence set amongst the burnt remains of war dead. Jake Gyllenhaal and a four-star supporting cast, including Peter Sarsgaard and Jamie Foxx, bring depth and range to a story that is at times confined by its one-voice narration. — R. Myers. (R: pervasive language, some violent images, strong sexual content.) 1 hour, 55 minutes. B+

"JUST FRIENDS": Ryan Reynolds stars as Chris, an effeminate high school senior with a weight problem. Reynolds, in a very convincing fat suit, longs for the fair Jamie (Amy Smart), who is, alas, content to be "Best Friends Forever." After a graduation night humiliation, he resolves to never again be trapped in "the friend zone." Ten years later, Chris is a cynical L.A. record company exec. Events conspire to send him home for the holidays, where Chris can take back up with Jamie, or lose her to looser-turned-player Dusty (Chris Klein) by reverting to his dweeby high school self. — R. Moore. (PG-13: sexual content, including some dialogue.) 1 hour, 38 minutes. C-

"KING KONG": The mighty ape rules yet again in this spectacular, but long-winded — three hours plus! — remake from director Peter Jackson ("Lord of the Rings"). Naomi Watts ("The Ring") makes a wonderful damsel in distress, a vaudeville actress who becomes the object of the 25-foot ape's affection. Jackson brings the timeless tale vividly to life, giving Kong the top billing he deserves. The creature is a special-effects marvel, who expresses both sympathy and fury as he woos the beauty who will be his downfall. The visionary Jackson takes a long time to get the party started, but once he and the cast land on Skull Island — a tropical nightmare filled with hellish sights and savages, along with mutant creepy crawlies and stampeding dinosaurs — the movie turns into a monster mash of epic proportions. A classic that could have been better with a few choice cuts to wrangle the absurdly long running time. — R. Myers. (PG-13: frightening adventure violence and some disturbing images.) 3 hours, 7 minutes. B+

"KISS KISS, BANG BANG": Writer Shane Black ("Lethal Weapon") scribbles gonzo in his first outing as a director with this clever, ribald and rambunctious sendup of film noir. A thief (Robert Downey Jr.) winds up in Los Angeles, where he becomes enmeshed in a real-life murder. Michele Monaghan brings great spunk to her role of a wannabe actress and love interest. The plot is cluttered, but there's so much energy, nifty dialogue and quirky side bits that you don't care. — R. Myers. (R: language, violence, sexuality/nudity.) 1 hour, 43 minutes. A-

"MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA": This beautiful epic based on the best-selling 1997 novel plays up the soap-opera elements as it chronicles the life of a pre-WWII Geisha. Ziyi Zhang ("House of Flying Daggers") plays Sayuri, a geisha of great acclaim who

finds herself terribly infatuated with an older man (Ken Watanabe) who seems barely aware of her existence. As directed by Ruff Marshall ("Chicago"), "Geisha" caresses our senses with its breathtaking imagery and lush photography, but what ultimately results is a slightly shallow version that emphasizes the melodrama. — R. Myers. (PG-13: mature subject matter and some sexual content.) 2 hours, 24 minutes. B

"MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS": This mildly naughty and fitfully entertaining comedy/drama finds Judi Dench playing a familiar role, that of an upstart widow who likes to engage in a battle of wits with anyone she encounters. Dench is indeed delightful as Laura Henderson, the proprietor of a vaudeville theater where the actresses go nude to buoy business, and Bob Hoskins as the theater manager she hires. But the tone shifts halfway through, slapping away the comedy and bringing in the drama. The resulting fusion just doesn't jell. — R. Myers. (R: nudity and brief language.) 1 hour, 43 minutes. C+

"MUNICH": Director Steven Spielberg creates another masterpiece in this harrowing, fictionalized account of the fallout involved when political retribution enters the global landscape. Eric Bana ("Troy") portrays the head of a secret Israeli team out to pick off the masterminds behind the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre. This powerful thriller, the year's best, asks us to consider the effectiveness — and human toll — of political vendettas. — R. Myers. (R: strong graphic violence, some sexual content, nudity and language.) 2 hours, 44 minutes. A

"NAKED IN ASHES": Paula Fouca's beautiful, illuminating documentary takes the viewer into the profoundly spiritual world of India's yogis, who see their taking on the sins of humanity as a source of healing and redemption for others. — K. Thomas. (Not rated.) 1 hour, 48 minutes. B+

"NORTH COUNTRY": Charlize Theron delivers another Oscar-worthy performance as a Minnesota mother of two who stands up to on-the-job sexual harassment and changes history. Director Nicki Caro ("Whale Rider") creates another strong female character in this based-on-a-true-story account that falters only when it enters the courtroom. A powerful and worthwhile film, even though the lead character is pure fiction. With Frances McDormand and Sissy Spacek. — R. Myers. (R: sequences involving sexual harassment, including violence and dialogue, also language.) 2 hours, 3 minutes. B+

"PARADISE NOW": Even though we know the film focuses on what might be the final 48 hours in the lives of suicide bombers, when we meet Said and Khaled, our reaction is, "It can't be them." A pair of regular guys, these genial, empathetic slackers have been close friends since childhood. What can lead an individual to act on the boast "he who is not afraid of death is the control of life?" The film seeks to answers this, and its determination not to take sides is what makes it so effective. — K. Turan. (PG-13: mature thematic material, brief strong language; in Arabic with subtitles.) 1 hour, 30 minutes. A

"PRIDE & PREJUDICE": Director Joe Wright brings robust energy and spunk to the Jane Austen classic as he loosens up the tale about romantic entanglements and class complications. Keira Knightley ("Domino") makes a fine heroine, with pluck and a dash for that brooding snob Mr. Darcy (Matthew Macfadyen). The two take a while to get the sparks firing, but once they do, they turn this beloved story into a romantic comedy that can stand on its own, even when compared with earlier versions. — R. Myers. (PG: some mild thematic elements.) 2 hours, 8 minutes. A-

See MOVIES, Page C4

FRIDAY MOVIE LISTINGS

Showtimes for Friday December 30

Alameda County

121st Center Street, Berkeley 510-464-5990
●Breakfast on Pluto (R) 1:30, 4:15, 7, 9:45
●One: The Movie (Not Rated) 2:30, 4:30, 4
●Sarah Silverman: Jesus is Magic (Not Rated) 7:15, 9:30.

Albany Twin

115 Solano Ave., Albany 510-464-5980
●Casanova (R) 11:30, 2, 4:25, 7, 9:25
●Good Night, And Good Luck (PG) 11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:15, 9:35.

AMC Bay Street 16

8914 Shellmound St., Emeryville 510-457-4262
●Aeon Flux (PG) 10:05
●Brokeback Mountain (R) 11, 2:20, 5:15, 8:15, 11:35

●Cheaper by the Dozen 2 (PG) 11:15, 1, 1:40, 3:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:15, 11:15
●Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (PG) 11:45, 12:45, 1:45, 3:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:15, 11:15, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:10, 11:40

●Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13) 11:40, 3:05, 6:30
●King Kong (PG-13) 10:45, 10:45, 11:30, 11:30, 12, 2:45, 2:45, 3:30, 3:30, 4, 4, 8:45, 6:45, 7:30, 7:30, 8, 8, 10:15, 10:15, 10:45, 10:45, 11:30, 11:30

●Memoirs of a Geisha (PG-13) 11:55, 11:55, 12:55, 2:15, 3:15, 4:15, 6:55, 6:55, 7:50, 10, 10, 11:05
●Pride & Prejudice (PG) 10:50, 1:35, 4:45, 8:10, 11:25

●The Producers (PG-13) 10:30, 1:50, 4:35, 7:45, 11:20
●Syriana (R) 10:55, 2, 5:10, 8:25, 11:10

California Theatre

2113 Kildee St., Berkeley 510-464-5980
●Brokeback Mountain (R) 1, 1:45, 4, 5, 7, 8:30, 10
●The Squid and the Whale (R) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:40, 9:40

Chabot Space & Science Center

3020 Skyline Blvd., Oakland 510-336-7300
●Cosmic Voyage (Not Rated) 10:30, 2:30
●Forces of Nature (Not Rated) 12:30, 8
●The Human Body (Not Rated) 4
●The Living Sea (Not Rated) 11:30, 7
●Lunar Lounge - Sonic Vision 7, 8:15
●Mysteries of Egypt (Not Rated) 1:30, 6

Elmwood 3

362 College Ave., Berkeley 510-649-0530
●Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13) 12:45, 5:50
●Judd Apatow's (PG-13) 3:45, 9
●Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (R) 12:15, 4:50, 8:05
●Rent (PG-13) 12:15, 3, 5:45, 8:30
●Walk the Line (PG-13) 2:15, 6:45

Renaissance Grand Lake Theatre

500 Grand Avenue, Oakland 510-452-3556
●Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (PG) 11:30, 3, 8:30, 9:30
●Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13) 12:15

●King Kong (PG-13) 12, 4, 8
●Rumor Has It... (PG-13) 12:10, 1:30, 3:45, 8:15, 10:15
●Syriana (R) 3:30, 7, 9:45

Oaks Theatre

1075 Solano Avenue, Berkeley 510-528-1836
●The Ring (PG-13) 12, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20,

9:45

●Rumor Has It... (PG-13) 11:45, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:35

Parkway Speakeasy Theater

1834 Park Blvd., Oakland 510-814-2400
●Good Night, And Good Luck (PG) 6:30
●Sarah Silverman: Jesus is Magic (Not Rated) 9:45
●Shopgirl (R) 7
●Walk the Line (PG-13) 9:15

Piedmont Theatre

4186 Piedmont Ave., Oakland 510-464-5980
●Brokeback Mountain (R) 11:30, 1, 2:30, 4, 7, 8:30, 10
●Match Point (R)
●Pride & Prejudice (PG) 12:45, 3:45, 6:45, 9:30

Regal Jack London

100 Washington, Oakland 510-433-1320
●Memoirs of a Geisha (PG-13) 11:40, 2:40, 5:45, 7:20, 9:45
●Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe (PG) 1:10, 3:30, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10, 10:45

●The Family Stone (PG-13) 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10, 11:45
●Fun With Dick & Jane (PG-13) 12:15, 2:45, 5:10, 7:45, 10:20
●King Kong (PG-13) 11:20, 12, 4, 7, 8, 11:45, 7:45, 10:05

●Fun With Dick & Jane (PG-13) 12, 1, 2:20, 3:25, 4:45, 5:55, 7:05, 8:10, 9:25, 10:25
●Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13) 12:05, 3:30, 6:50, 10:10
●King Kong (PG-13) 11:40, 1:45, 3:35, 5:45, 7:30, 8:35, 9:40

●Memoirs of a Geisha (PG-13) 12:50, 3:15, 7:15, 10:20
●The Producers (PG-13) 12:40, 3:40, 6:50, 9:55
●The Ring (PG-13) 12:15, 2:40, 5:05, 7:35, 9:50

●Rumor Has It... (PG-13) 11:55, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:45
●Syriana (R) 1:30, 4:25, 7:25, 10:15
●Wolf Creek (R) 12:25, 2:55, 5:20, 7:40, 10, 9:55

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9:35

●King Kong (PG-13) 12, 4, 7:45
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Movies

FROM PAGE C3

"PRIME": Uma Thurman is Rafi, 37, and newly divorced. Dave (Bryan Greenberg), at 23, is a swinging, callow hipster who hasn't figured out women. The two meet, have a date and hit it off. The kicker in this featherweight comedy — heavy on the Jewish boy/Jewish mom schtick — is that Rafi bares her soul about this sexy new infatuation with her shrink (Meryl Streep), who soon realizes the boy in question is her son. And she doesn't approve. — R. Moore. (PG-13: sexual content including dialogue; language.) 1 hour, 40 minutes. B

"THE PRODUCERS": Although it's little more than a filmed version of the Broadway hit, this off-color musical about a producer (Nathan Lane) and an accountant (Matthew Broderick) who try to turn a profit by creating theater's hugest flop is still good fun. The best parts of funnyman Mel Brooks' ribald, loving sendup of Broadway occur when the duo's "Springtime for Hitler" debuts in all its tastelessness. Will Ferrell as the show's Hitler-loving playwright and the rest of the supporting cast are delightful. — R. Myers. (PG-13: sexual humor and references.) 2 hours, 14 minutes. B

"PULSE": Spooky, spooky, spooky. When a young computer technician fails to deliver a disc and doesn't return calls, his friend Michi goes looking for him, only to find him in his dark apartment, seemingly fine but oddly remote. Michi rummages for the disc while the friend hangs himself in an adjoining room, leaving a mysterious stain on the wall. Soon, Michi and her friends begin receiving mysterious cell-phone calls. Ghost images appear on their computer screens, and sealed doors to hidden rooms beckon. — C. Chocano. (Not rated; contains frightening images of supernatural horror and suicide; in Japanese with subtitles.) 1 hour, 50 minutes. B+

"RENT": The rock opera beloved by a young generation stumbles a bit in its transition to the screen. Director Chris Columbus prefers gloss over grit, stripping the Pulitzer Prize-winner of one of the reasons it was so lauded. Still, the cast, made up of "Rent" stage veterans, is strong, and the music and story does rock. But Columbus seems uncertain too often, annoyingly sending his camera in a talspin when we should be looking in on these eight young adults struggling to make sense out of life, love and death in 1979 New York. — R. Myers. (PG-13: mature thematic material involving drugs and sexuality, some strong language.) 2 hours, 8 minutes. B-

"THE RINGER": Johnny Knoxville stars as an average guy who pretends he's mentally challenged in order to rig the Special Olympics. This latest offering from Peter and Bobby Farrelly could have been painful to watch in its political incorrectness or, conversely, an insufferably feel-good life lesson. Yet it's surprisingly funny — often laugh-out-loud hilarious — and yes, inspirational, without trying too hard. — C. Lemire. (PG-13: crude and sexual humor.) 1 hour, 33 minutes. C+

"RUMOR HAS IT ...": Jennifer Aniston receives star billing, but Shirley MacLaine shoves everyone aside with her boozey and bitter act as an older and meaner Mrs. Robinson. Aniston valiantly tries to make her character appealing as she searches for her father, whom she suspects is the real "Graduate." There are some funny moments here, but little chemistry between the leads. Mark Ruffalo turns in another likable guy performance, making you kind of wish the movie would have hooked him up with MacLaine. Now, that would have been a story worth telling. — R. Myers. (PG-13: mature thematic material, sexual content, crude humor and a drug reference.) B-

"SARAH SILVERMAN: JESUS IS MAGIC": Basically a recording of a one-woman show comedian Sarah Silverman performed last year. The act is built, to a large extent, on the discrepancies between her appearance and her material. Most of the humor here depends on the scandal of hearing a nice, middle-class Jewish girl make jokes about rape, the Holocaust and AIDS. — A.O. Scott. (Not rated.) 1 hour, 40 minutes. B-

"SAW II": The surprise horror hit of last year spawns a gory sequel that is effective and deadly serious about what it wants to do. A terminally ill serial killer named Jigsaw toys with a burnt-out detective as he tortures eight misfits, including the cop's son, in a booby-trapped house. "Saw II" is better made than the first "Saw," but it could use a jolt of camp. — R. Myers. (R: strong violence, drug use, language and sexuality.) 1 hour, 31 minutes. C+

"SHOPGIRL": Steve Martin stars in this romantic comedy based on his own novella of the same name. Mirabelle Butterfield (Claire Danes) sells gloves at Saks Fifth Avenue in

Beverly Hills. Mostly, she stands behind a counter, removed from the main retail action. What she needs, Martin's introductory voice-over tells us, is someone to recognize and appreciate her, to pluck her out from the crowd. The movie itself does this, and so do her two suitors who become unwitting rivals for Mirabelle's affection (Martin and Jason Schwartzbaum). — A.O. Scott. (R: some sexuality, brief language.) 1 hour, 44 minutes. A

"THE SQUID AND THE WHALE": Jeff Daniels stars in this tale of bitter divorce and family breakdown. He plays Bernard, a writing professor and novelist whose talent is drying up, and who grows increasingly sour over his wife's (Laura Linney) rising fortunes as a writer. All this couple has left to offer their kids is rancor. The decision to split up and share custody quickly follows. — D. Germain. (R: strong sexual content, graphic dialogue, language.) 1 hour, 28 minutes. B+

"SYRIANA": This relevant, meaty and episodic political thriller ties together multiple narratives to provocatively peer into the world's perilous oil addiction. Director/Writer Stephen Gaghan uses a flash-cut approach similar to what he did for his Oscar-winning "Traffic." But in his first outing as director, he has fashioned a compelling and urgent film that also frustrates. "Syriana" is just too much of a good thing, overly cluttered with characters to the point of confusion. George Clooney, Matt Damon and Jeffrey Wright head an A-list cast given lines worthy of Shakespeare. — R. Myers. (R: violence and language.) 2 hours, 6 minutes. B

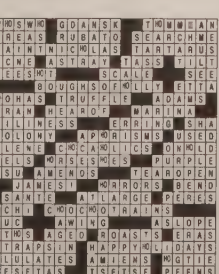
"TRANSAMERICA": In this uneven comedy, Felicity Huffman plays Bree, a pre-op male-to-female transsexual. She is eagerly looking forward to her surgery when she gets a call from Toby (Kevin Zegers), a 17-year-old Manhattan street hustler who's landed in jail and is trying to find his father, whom he has never met, but who had a brief affair with his late mother. — K. Thomas. (R: nudity, obscenities.) 1 hour, 43 minutes. B-

"USHZPANI": Moshe (screenwriter Shuli Rand) is a good Jew but a lousy provider, always close to broke and unable even to afford the material to build a sukkah, a temporary shelter observant Orthodox Jews live in during the Sukkot holidays. He and his wife, the imposing Mali (Rand's real-life wife, Michal Bat Sheva Rand), want a child, but God hasn't come through on that, either. Nothing to do but pray, and the sneaky joke here is that prayers have a way of immediately being answered, if not always in the fashion the petitioners had hoped. — T. Burr. (PG: mild thematic elements, in Hebrew with subtitles.) 1 hour, 31 minutes. B-

"WALK THE LINE": Joaquin Phoenix burns up the screen as the Man in Black in this engrossing and complex film biography of Johnny Cash. Phoenix delivers an electric performance, channeling the spirit of the influential and enigmatic singer. Reese Witherspoon has never been better as his touring partner and eventual love interest, June Carter. Director and co-writer James Mangold ("Gladiator") plumbs the soul of the singer, showing us his demons and his inspirations. Expect Phoenix to be walking that line right to the Oscar ceremony. — R. Myers. (PG-13: some language, thematic material, depiction of drug dependency.) 2 hours, 16 minutes. A-

"WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT": The first full-length screen adventure of the cheese-obsessed Wallace and his caretaking canine Gromit will delight young and old. The lovable claymation duo from England encounter all sorts of mayhem when one of Wallace's half-baked inventions goes seriously awry, resulting in a Bunny Big foot that's chewing up veggie patches. Countless verbal and visual gags run throughout this clever homage to horror films. — R. Myers. (G) 1 hour, 25 minutes. A-

"WOLF CREEK": Another pitiless serial-killer thriller. This one takes place in Australia, where two "sheilas" (girls) take a road trip with a new pal, Ben, in a beat-up station wagon. At Wolf Creek, they're soon up You-Know-What Creek without a paddle when, after a hike, their car won't start. No worries. Old Mick, an Outbacker, will fix 'er right up. Except he doesn't. — R. Moore. (R: strong gruesome violence, language.) 1 hour, 39 minutes. C

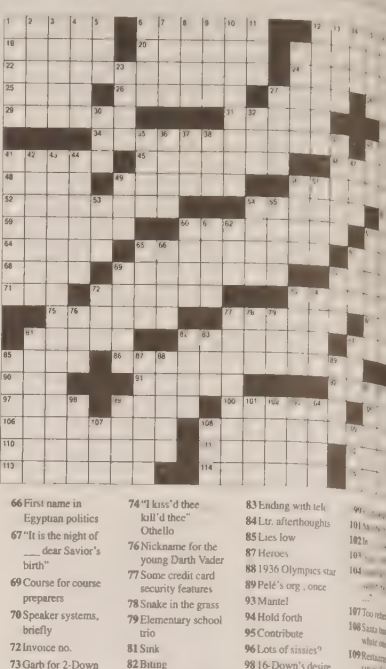


NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

A LITTLE LAUGHTER BY NANCY SALOMON AND HARVEY ESTES / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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Events

STAGE

BERKELEY CITY CLUB —

"Walking the Dead," Jan. 5 through Oct. 29. Theatre Q presents Keith Curran's work about the tragic death of a transgendered person. Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. \$20 general; \$18 students and seniors. (510) 326-8197 or www.theatre-q.org.

2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley.

BERKELEY REPERTORY THEATRE —

"Monday Night PlayGround," Oct. 17 through March 20, 8 p.m. A monthly series presenting staged readings of short works by new and emerging playwrights. Third Monday of every month. \$16. (415) 704-3177 or www.playground-st.org.

2025 Addison St., Berkeley. (510) 647-2949. (888) 4BR-Tix or www.berkeleyrep.org.

BERKELEY-RICHMOND JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER —

"Dirt and Glory: Return of the Golem," Dec. 29 and Jan. 1. Traveling Jewish Theatre presents a modern tale based on the story of a 16th-century rabbi who was said to have created a golem, a Frankenstein-like creature, from the earth in order to protect his people. This play uses robots, mysticism, monster movies and biotechnology to identify modern golems and answer the question, "How can we control what we have unleashed?" Thursday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. \$22 to \$30 general; \$10 children. (415) 522-0786 or www.ajtj.com.

1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. (510) 848-0327 or www.bjrcp.org.

MASQUERS PLAYHOUSE —

"Masquers Playhouse: The First Fifty Years," Dec. 31, 7-30 p.m. and 10-30 p.m. Come usher in 2006 with a retrospective of half a century of musicals, comedy, and drama, performed mainly by the original Masquer casts. Hosted by Robert Love, and featuring Pat King and the Masquers Orchestra. The evening includes champagne, hors d'oeuvres, and a goodie bag. Evening wear is encouraged. Reservations required. \$40 per person.

105 Park Place, Point Richmond. (510) 232-4031 or www.masquers.org.

SHOTGUN PLAYERS —

"Cabaret," Dec. 2 through Jan. 29. This Broadway musical-drama about life in pre-World-War-II Germany is centered around the decadent KitKat Club Cabaret, and includes such hit songs as "Willkommen," "Don't Tell Mama" and "Life is a Cabaret" of

chum! Thursday through Sunday, 8 p.m.; Dec. 18, 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.; NO SHOWS Dec. 22 THROUGH DEC. 25. \$15 to \$30.

"New Year's Eve Gala Performance," New Year's Eve Gala Performance, Dec. 31, 8 p.m. This New Year's Eve Gala includes a performance of "Cabaret," the Broadway musical-drama about life in pre-World-War-II Germany centered around the decadent KitKat Club Cabaret by Joe Masteroff, John Kander and Fred Ebb, and a post-show party featuring party favors, champagne, dancing and chocolate. Reservations suggested. \$50 per person.

The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. (510) 841-6500 or www.shotgunplayers.org.

THE MARSH BERKELEY —

"Cirque Do Something," Dec. 3 through Dec. 30. A family performance of clowning and circus arts by Moshe Cohen and Unique Derique, featuring unicycles, bicycles, human percussion, battles with music, disappearing acts and the ubiquitous rubber chicken. Dec. 3, Dec. 4, Dec. 10, Dec. 11, Dec. 17, Dec. 18 and Dec. 27 through Dec. 30, 1 p.m. \$10 to \$15.

"Walkin' Talkin' Bill Hawkins...In Search of My Father," Jan. 6 through Jan. 28. A show written and performed by W. Allen Taylor, recalling his adventurous search for his absent father, Bill Hawkins, the first black disc jockey in Cleveland, Ohio. Thursday through Saturday, 7 p.m.; NO SHOW JAN. 7. \$15 to \$22 general; pay what you can on Thursdays. Tickets: (800) 838-3006.

The Gaia Building, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. Info: (415) 826-5750. Tickets: (800) 838-3006 or www.the-marsh.org.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CAL PERFORMANCES — All performances in Zellerbach Hall unless otherwise noted.

Julia Fischer, Jan. 8, 3 p.m. The violinist, accompanied by pianist Oliver Schnyder, performs works by Schubert, Grieg, Bach and Saint-Saens. In Hertz Hall. \$42.

Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Way at Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. (510) 642-9988 or www.calperforms.berkeley.edu.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKELEY —

"The San Francisco Chamber Orchestra's New Year's 2006 Concert," Dec. 31, 8 p.m. With the Jacques Thibaud Trio from Berlin. A performance cele-

brating Mozart's 250th anniversary to start the New Year off on the right foot. Included will be works by Mozart, Beethoven, Danzi, and Francaix, plus a smoldering tango by Golijov. Free. www.sfbamberorchestra.org.

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. **TRINITY CHAMBER CONCERTS** — The Sarabande Ensemble, Jan. 7, 8 p.m. A program of early Italian music performed on lutes, violin, spinet, guitar and voice.

\$12 general; \$8 seniors, disabled persons and students. Trinity Chapel, 2320 Dana St., Berkeley. (510) 549-3864 or www.trinitychamberconcerts.com.

POPULAR MUSIC

924 GILMAN ST. — All ages welcome. Burial Day, Bafabegaly, Acts of Sedition, Dangers, Love Songs, Dec. 30. Jewdriver, Sigma 13, Second Class Citizen, Year of the Wildcat, Dec. 31. Municipal Waste, Bury the Living, Killed in Action, Insect Warfare-Hatred Surge, Born-Dead, Jan. 6. Dudman, NKS, Signal Lost, Bumbklaat, Lack of Interest, Burn Your Bridges, SMD, No Dice, Jan. 7.

\$5 unless otherwise noted. Shows start Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 5 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 924 Gilman St., Berkeley. (510) 525-9926 or www.924gilman.org.

ALBATROSS PUB —

Whiskey Brothers, Ongoing. Old-time and bluegrass. First and third Wednesdays of every month. Free. New Year's Eve Celebration with the Four Tet Jazz Group, Dec. 31, 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. The show includes party favors and a midnight champagne toast. \$7. Shows begin Wednesday, 9 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. (510) 843-2473 or www.albatrosspub.com.

ASHKENAZ —

Lucky Otis, Dec. 30, 9:30 p.m. \$13

general; \$11 students. "New Year's Eve Balkan Bash!" Anoush, Edessa and Brum Anoush, Dec. 31, 8 p.m. A night family celebration featuring Balkan music and dance. \$20. Emam and Friends, Jan. 5, 8 p.m. \$12.

Grapefruit Ed, Jan. 6, 9:30 p.m. "Breakin' Up Xmas Square Dance!" Jan. 7, 7 p.m. A family dancing party featuring Army and Karen and the Dimes. \$12 general; \$6 ages 18 and free for children under age 13. 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 525-5054 or www.ashkenaz.com.

AURORA THEATRE COMPANY —

"A Little Cole in Your Stomach," Jan. 21 through Dec. 30. A new Bay Area husband and wife duo featuring Meg Mackay and Billy Phillips, featuring Cole Porter songs and rarities, as well as modern non-traditional holiday tunes. Wednesday through Friday, \$25.

Aurora Theatre, 2081 Addison St., Berkeley. (510) 843-4822 or aurora-theatre.com.

BLAKE'S ON TELEGRAPH —

New Year's Eve Party, Dec. 31 p.m. Celebrate the New Year with a live show by The Kahone Nation. Tickets, An Opatate for Angels and Wreckers. Champagne and favors are included. \$15.

For ages 18 and older. Music: 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. 2367 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 848-0886 or www.blaques.com.

CLUB ANTON —

New Year's Eve Celebration, Dec. 31 p.m. The Latin jazz club featuring dancing to live music by the band Andy y Orquesta Caliente as well as appetizers, nose-to-nose party hats and a midnight champagne toast. \$50. 428 Third St., Oakland. (510) 462-0000 or www.clubanton.com.

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NEW GUINEA cultural collection was one of the first exhibits presented at the new de Young Museum in San Francisco.

arts

FROM PAGE C8

Museum. Even more obscure than the Baroque master painter Paul Rubens drew crowds at the UC Berkeley Art Museum. There was good news on the Bay gallery scene, too, with the new Contemporary Art Museum, Artscape Studios in San Francisco and Worthington Gallery in Pleasanton.

Top 10

New Guinea and African collections, de Young Museum: The new building in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park sometimes feel like an overscale art museum, but the intimate, intimate galleries for these contemporary art collections are appealing and mysterious. "Drawn by the Brush: Oil Paintings by Peter Paul Rubens," UC Berkeley Art Museum: An exhibit of "oil

sketches" seemed unpromising in advance, but this was a stunning revelation of the Baroque artist's hand. It felt like walking into his studio, and the power of his religious subjects was still awesome.

3. NIAD Art Center, Richmond: Several exhibits during the year at the National Institute of Art and Disabilities gallery revealed that "outsider art" can be thoughtful and accomplished. "Some of the people who are the most disabled are the most powerful artists," noted director Pat Coleman.

4. "Robert Bechtle: A Retrospective," S.F. Museum of Modern Art: Bechtle's big paintings of Alameda streets, other East Bay neighborhoods and looming 1960s cars created a world that hovered somewhere between reality and photography.

5. "Pots: Objects of Virtue," Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek: The title of the exhibit told the tale, and the exhibit was rich with works by local potters. It proved again that clay can be as versatile as any other medium in the hands of an imag-

inative artist.

6. Sha Sha Higby works, Crockett Contemporary Art: Layer upon layer of worldwide cultures seemed to be swirling in the elaborate "costume sculptures" created by the Marin County performance artist. Her smaller works were equally intriguing in the fresh setting of the new Crockett gallery.

7. "The Kingdom of Siam," Asian Art Museum, San Francisco: This museum has a great talent for creating a culture through its art — in this case, central Thailand during a 400-year golden age. There were magnificent crowns and lacquered panels, but just as revealing were charming little terra-cotta models of temples, amazingly preserved for hundreds of years.

8. "Eureka," UC Berkeley Art Museum: This exhibit of works by Eureka Fellowship Award-winners showed the diversity of the Bay Area's most innovative artists — not all of them fresh from art school. They ranged from John Bankston's dreamy painting of

two cowboys riding into a rainbow to Jim Christensen's skeletal sculpture of remembered homes of his childhood.

9. "Baseball as America," Oakland Museum: This big, slick exhibit from the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum turned Oakland into a corner of Cooperstown. Most interesting, really, were the locally added mementos of the Giants, A's, San Francisco Seals and Oakland Oaks — including home plate from Oaks Park in Emeryville. (The exhibit runs through Jan. 22.)

10. Photographs by Art Levi, Photolab, Berkeley: The Oakland photographer's "Grids and Reflections" exhibit was filled with discoveries, almost like abstract paintings. They transformed such subjects as Oakland railroad yards and abandoned industrial sites in Richmond, and even Levi's nature photographs offered layers of meaning.

Reach Robert Taylor at 925-977-8428 or rtaylor@cctimes.com.

Classical

FROM PAGE C8

But this year's appearance of Ma gave the event more of the usual luster. Joining the orchestra and the orchestra in the Cello Concerto, the great cellist combined skill and charisma with his unerring musicianship. "Brundibar" and "Comedy on the Bridge," Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Nov. 16: There they were, very visible in the pit beneath the Rep's Roda Theatre as a contingent of Berkeley Symphony musicians, conducted by Valerie Gebert, playing with admirable flair in short operas. As the musical composition in this brightly engaging production, they sounded fabulous.

Midsummer Mozart Festival, July 15, Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco: Celestrars everywhere play part, but no one does it quite like George Cleve and the Midsummer Mozart Festival. Cleve Company launched their 31st season in high style with a delightful program featuring the composer's "Paris" Symphony. Bernstein's "Mass," Oakland East Bay Symphony, May 20: Bernstein's "Mass" has had a troubled history since its first performance in 1971, but Michael Morgan, the

Oakland Symphony Chorus, the Piedmont Chorus and a team of singers led by Hector Vasquez made a strong case for the work with this spirited, outsized performance.

10. Kronos Quartet, May 17: Terry Riley turned 70 this year, and the always-innovative Kronos Quartet celebrated with the world premiere of the composer's luminous, aptly named "The Cusp of Magic." Glorious music, with Riley on hand to bask in the glow.

The disappointments

■ "Fidelio," San Francisco Opera, Nov. 9: It looked good on paper — the San Francisco Opera production of Beethoven's opera promised a stirring evening in the War Memorial. But the cast didn't jell, and the opening-night performance never caught fire.

■ "Candide," Festival Opera, Aug. 13, Regional Center for the Arts: Leonard Bernstein's opera should be bright, fast-paced and funny. But Festival Opera's summer production was none of the above. Despite strong singing in the principal roles, Michael Scarola's staging left the cast to their own devices.

■ Renee Fleming, Jan. 23, Zellerbach Hall: Renee Fleming has given great performances here in the past, but the superstar soprano's January concert for Cal Performances was un-



THE WORLD PREMIERE of John Adams' "Doctor Atomic" by the San Francisco Opera earned a rave from our critic.

even and unfocused.

■ Solo Opera folds, summer 2005: Solo Opera wasn't the only Bay Area arts group to be hit hard by budget woes this year. But the Walnut Creek-based chamber opera company, which gave us a radiant production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" a few years back, couldn't ride out the storm. The company closed its doors earlier this year.

■ No opera in January? San Francisco Opera: Budget considerations have also put an end to the S.F. Opera's long-running tradition of presenting fall productions with second casts in January. Next month will seem cold without them.

Reach Georgia Rowe at growe@pacbell.net.

Page

FROM PAGE C8

"Noel & Gertie," Center Rep: A little bit musical and a little bit drama, this play of Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence gave the Center Rep season a sophisticated touch. This extremely entertaining show managed to create a delightfully effective mood and captured the entertainment of the two performers lived

"Los Big Names," Magic Theatre: Marga Gomez, an always-outstanding comedian, told the tale of her parents' show business career, her growing up in a house of divas, in a charming and hilarious solo show. This was Gomez at her best.

8. "The Goat," ACT: Edward Albee's bizarre play about a man who loved animals turned some audience members off, but it was an exceptionally well-done show that pushed the envelope — as well as the bounds of good taste — to provide an engaging and challenging evening of theater.

9. "Golda's Balcony," ACT brought Tovah Feldsuh to San Francisco to perform her one-woman show about Golda Meir, before, during and after her stint as prime minister of Israel. Her performance was stunning, and the entire show was extremely well-done.

10. "700 Sundays," Golden Gate Theatre: This comedy autobiography by Billy Crystal proves that Billy may be the funniest man on earth. It is also a touching and wonderfully human story

of a remarkable person growing up in what turns out to be a remarkable family.

The disappointments

■ "Lennon," Orpheum Theatre: The show was produced with the full cooperation of Yoko Ono, which may explain why it reeked from top to bottom. This bad-to-the-bone musical went on to fail horribly during a brief Broadway run following its San Francisco debut.

■ "Trumbo: Red, White & Blacklisted," Post Street Theatre: Brian Dennehy is a great actor, but in this one-man show about blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, he just couldn't pull it off.

■ "Tea at 5," Marines Memorial Theatre: Kate Mulgrew looks and sounds a lot like Katharine

Hepburn. But she failed to even come close to the heart and soul of the remarkable Kate she was supposed to be playing.

■ "As You Like It," Theatre Royal Bath: This big-time Shakespeare company from Bath, England, came through with a lackluster production of the well-known comedy that started in slow motion, and only got better after it was far too late to care.

■ "For Better or Worse," Berkeley Rep: Old French comedy is even more annoying than new French comedy. But even in this production, based on an early 20th century work, Geoff Hoyle was outstanding, particularly with the original material he added.

Reach Pat Craig at 925-945-4736 or pcraig@cctimes.com.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BEST SELLERS

Compiled from sales at 45 independent bookstores in Northern California.

Fiction

1. "The Lighthouse," by P.D. James. (Knopf, \$25.95.)
2. "Saving Fish From Drowning," by Amy Tan. (Putnam, \$26.95.)
3. "S is for Silence," by Sue Grafton. (Putnam, \$26.95.)
4. "Amazing Peace," by Maya Angelou. (Random House, \$9.95.)
5. "On Beauty," by Zadie Smith. (Penguin, \$25.95.)
6. "Memories of My Melancholy Whores," by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. (Knopf, \$20.)
7. "The March," by E.L. Doctorow. (Random House, \$25.95.)
8. "Son of a Witch," by Gregory Maguire. (ReganBooks, \$26.95.)
9. "The Sea," by John Banville. (Knopf, \$23.)
10. "Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt," by Anne Rice. (Knopf, \$25.95.)

Nonfiction

1. "The Year of Magical Thinking," by Joan Didion. (Knopf, \$23.95.)
2. "Our Endangered Values," by Jimmy Carter. (Simon & Schuster, \$25.)
3. "Teacher Man," by Frank McCourt. (Scribner, \$26.)
4. "Team of Rivals," by Doris Kearns Goodwin. (Simon & Schuster, \$35.)
5. "Freconomics," by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner. (William Morrow, \$25.95.)
6. "The World Is Flat," by Thomas L. Friedman. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$27.50.)
7. "Marley & Me," by John Grogan. (William Morrow, \$21.95.)
8. "The Elements of Style, Illustrated," by William Strunk and E.B. White, illustrated by Maira Kalman. (Penguin, \$24.95.)
9. "A Man Without a Country," by Kurt Vonnegut. (Seven Stories, \$23.95.)
10. "City of Falling Angels," by John Berendt. (Penguin, \$25.95.)

Trade paperback fiction

1. "The Kite Runner," by Khaled Hosseini. (Riverhead, \$14.)
2. "Memoirs of a Geisha," by Arthur Golden. (Vintage, \$14.95.)

3. "Runaway," by Alice Munro. (Vintage, \$14.95.)
4. "Prep," by Curtis Sittenfeld. (Random House, \$13.95.)
5. "Snow," by Orhan Pamuk. (Vintage, \$14.95.)
6. "Brokeback Mountain," by Annie Proulx. (Scribner, \$9.95.)
7. "The Best American Short Stories 2005," edited by Michael Chabon. (Houghton Mifflin, \$14.)
8. "Wicked," by Gregory Maguire. (ReganBooks, \$15.)
9. "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," by Mark Haddon. (Vintage, \$12.95.)
10. "The Shadow of the Wind," by Carlos Ruiz Zafon. (Penguin, \$15.)

Trade paperback nonfiction

1. "A Million Little Pieces," by James Frey. (Anchor, \$14.95.)
2. "Bad Cat," by Jim Edgar. (Workman, \$9.95.)
3. "Holidays on Ice," by David Sedaris. (Back Bay, \$8.95.)
4. "Bad Dog," by R.D. Rosen, Harry Prichett and Rob Battles. (Three Rivers, \$12.95.)
5. "Chronicles," by Bob Dylan. (Simon & Schuster, \$14.)
6. "San Francisco Bay Area Restaurants," by the editors of Zagat Survey. (Zagat Survey, \$12.95.)
7. "In Cold Blood," by Truman Capote. (Vintage, \$14.)
8. "Guns, Germs, and Steel," by Jared Diamond. (Norton, \$16.95.)
9. "1,000 Places to See Before You Die," by Patricia Schultz. (Pocket, \$7.99.)
10. "The Tipping Point," by Malcolm Gladwell. (Back Bay, \$14.95.)

Mass market paperback

1. "The Broker," by John Grisham. (Dell, \$7.99.)
2. "State of Fear," by Michael Crichton. (Avon, \$7.99.)
3. "Angels & Demons," by Dan Brown. (Pocket, \$7.99.)
4. "Whiteout," by Ken Follett. (Signet, \$7.99.)
5. "The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary," Fourth Edition. (Merriam-Webster, \$7.50)

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Arts & Leisure

Friday, December 30, 2005



J.B. ALDERMAN
On DVDs

Quirky 'Parrots' is a local winner

"The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill"

Quirky, sweet and surprisingly endearing, "Parrots" is a documentary as much about recovering hippie Mark Bittner as it is about the unusual flock of birds that makes its home in the wilds of San Francisco. For five years Bittner cared for the parrots from the porch of his apartment on Telegraph Hill, and we see him feeding, nursing and generally obsessing over the birds. Bittner comes across as a lost soul whose inspiring love for the birds consumes much of his time. As with most documentaries, children and teens will be a bit bored, but adults will savor the genuineness of the birds and their patron. (G). 1 hour and 23 minutes.

Ratings (out of 4 stars):

Overall: 3 stars

Kids: 2 stars

Teens: 2 stars

Adults: 3 stars

Seniors: 3 stars

Should you rent it? Yes — it's Bay Area documentary film-making at its best.

"Fantastic Four"

As a 10-year-old, one of my prized possessions was a well-read copy of a Fantastic Four comic book (issue 15). I loved the teamwork and the imaginative powers given to this group of crime-fighting superheroes. So I was set to turn off my brain and enjoy watching the film version of the popular Marvel title. Sadly, however, this is no "X-Men." We see how the Invisible Woman (Jessica Alba) and the rest of the Fab Four get their superpowers from a freak cosmic storm in space, and how they battle their arch enemy Dr. Doom. Snooze. To add insult to injury, the DVD ends by laying the groundwork for a sequel. Teens may not care about the poor acting and razor-thin plot, but all adults should. Kids under 11 will probably be overwhelmed by the action and violence. (PG-13: for violence). 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Ratings (out of 4 stars):

Overall: 2 stars

Kids: 2 1/2

Teens: 3 stars

Adults: 2 stars

Seniors: 1 star

Should you rent it? No. If you're old enough to drive a car, you're too old for this DVD.

"Must Love Dogs"

A romantic comedy that is neither, "Dogs" tries and fails to be the successor to the charming 1998 hit "You've Got Mail." I am a big fan of John Cusack, who stars here as an idealistic boat builder longing for love and equally wary of having his heart broken again. But even Cusack's solid acting chops and skillful sense of timing can't breathe life into a script that seems to have been lifted from the recycling bin of a third-rate TV sitcom. Meant to appeal to divorced 40-somethings, the DVD instead manages to lurch between trite scenes and maudlin faux redemption. I wound up not caring if the heroes found love or not; I just wanted them to go away. The focus on sex is significant, making it a bad fit for children under 13. (PG-13: Sexual content). 1 hour and 38 minutes.

Ratings (out of 4 stars):

Overall: 1 1/2 stars

Kids: N/A

Teens: 1 1/2 stars

Adults: 2 stars

Seniors: 1 1/2 stars

Should you rent it? No. Rent a Tom Hanks/Meg Ryan DVD instead.

J.B. Alderman lives in Piedmont and can be reached via PhDVD.com.

THE YEAR'S TOP 10

Strong emotions reigned onstage

By Pat Craig

STAFF WRITER

THIS WAS the best year for theater in the Bay Area in recent memory — even the short list of the year's top plays ran quite long.

Offerings ranged from the gripping "The People's Temple" at Berkeley Repertory Theatre to Billy Crystal's poignant autobiographical show, "700 Sundays." Not to mention thrilling revivals of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and "Our Town."

Still, 2005 also had its array of stinkers, led by a Broadway-bound musical about a former Beatle.

Top 10

1. "Nicholas Nickleby," California Shakespeare Theatre: The show was presented in two parts, and ran six hours. But this theatrical version of the Charles Dickens novel made summer theater great in the Bay Area, and was the finest show in a fine year.

2. "The People's Temple," Berkeley Repertory Theatre: This tale of the rise and fall of Jim Jones' church was a taut, emotional and outstanding drama, developed in the Bay Area by Z Space. Totally engaging, it offered new information to even those familiar with the tragic story.

3. "Our Town," Berkeley Rep: The classic Thornton Wilder show, produced millions of times by millions of high schools, got a whole new life in this production. The Berkeley Rep version remained true to the simplicity of the play, with its plainspoken eloquence of writing. And some of the acting was outstanding.

4. "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," ACT: Tennessee Williams' humid tale of family, sex and sexuality got an unusual and unusually entertaining retelling in this 50th anniversary revival, which felt at times like a three-ring emotional circus.

5. "The Price," Aurora Theatre: Arthur Miller's story of a reunion between brothers in the cluttered attic of their parents' home could be one of Miller's best plays. And the Aurora production told the story with both intensity and humor.

See STAGE, Page C7



CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER'S production of "Nicholas Nickleby" featured the talents of Andy Murray, Michael Andrew Hurteau and Stephen Barker Turner.



SHERRY LAVARS/STAFF FILE
TOVAH FELDSSHUH was a knockout in her one-woman show "Golda's Balcony," about Israeli prime minister Golda Meir.



COLEMAN DOMINGO plays a survivor of the Jonestown disaster in Berkeley Rep's "The People's Temple," an emotional and remarkable piece of theater in 2005.

FINE ARTS



BERKELEY ART MUSEUM
PETER PAUL RUBENS' "Head of a Negro" is an oil sketch that was displayed at the UC Berkeley Art Museum's "Drawn by the Brush."

Diverse displays enriched art scene

By Robert Taylor

STAFF WRITER

THE REOPENING of the Young Museum in its sprawling, copper-clad new building in San Francisco was the major news in the Bay Area art world in 2005. But the opening didn't settle the controversy over the design — it just gave visitors a close-up view for continued de-

bate over the architecture and revamped art collection.

The view from the twisting tower may be the most stunning sight any museum offers, but the building wasn't the only focus for art lovers this year. Rarely seen artifacts from Thailand and Tibet were displayed at the Asian

See ART, Page C7

CLASSICAL MUSIC

A year of risks and departures

By Georgia Rowe

CORRESPONDENT

THE YEAR 2005 will be remembered in classical music circles as a year of firsts and lasts: the San Francisco Opera's high-profile world premiere of "Doctor Atomic" got the most attention, but there were also first performances of new works (by Terry Riley, Kurt Rohde, Kevin Puts and others), and revivals of old ones (Stravinsky's "Le Rossignol," in its first San Francisco Symphony performances).

Audiences also said goodbye to S.F. Opera general director Pamela Rosenberg (departing for a new job as intendant of the Berlin Philharmonic) and Vance George, who leaves a post as S.F. Symphony Chorus director after 24 years.

The year also brought the welcome return of superstars such as Yo-Yo Ma, Cecilia Bartoli and the Kronos Quartet, and visits from guest conductors Oliver Knussen, Harry Christophers and David Robertson. Local orchestras, including the Berkeley, California and Oakland East Bay symphonies, continued to thrive. Not everything worked, but for the most part, it was a very good year.

Top 10

1. "Doctor Atomic," San Francisco Opera, Oct. 1, 2005: All eyes were on "Doctor Atomic" this fall, and the world premiere of John Adams' opera lived up to the hype. Commissioned by the San Francisco Opera, the new work delved into one of the most controversial subjects of our time: the building of the first atomic bomb. Adams and his director/librettist, Peter Sellars, brought physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer and the other key



SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY'S semi-staged production of Igor Stravinsky's rarely performed "Le Rossignol" was a year's high points.

players in the U.S. government's top-secret Manhattan Project to life in a mesmerizing production. And the score demonstrated that Adams remains this country's greatest living composer.

2. "Oedipus Rex" and "Le Rossignol," San Francisco Symphony and Chorus, Dec. 8: With two rarely performed Stravinsky works — the opera-oratorio "Oedipus Rex" — Michael Tilson Thomas and the S.F. Symphony gave audiences a top-flight evening of musical theater. Semi-staged, featuring a large cast of singers, actors, dancers and extras (along with Vance George's superb S.F. Symphony Chorus), the program dazzled the eyes and the ears.

3. Cecilia Bartoli, Oct. 6, Zellerbach Hall: A Bay Area visit from Cecilia Bartoli is always an event, but the Italian mezzo-soprano was at her finest in this fall's Cal Performances concert. Singing mu-

sic from her latest, "Proibita," Bartoli showed musical mastery and emotion in an unforgettable performance.

4. "Atalanta," San Francisco Opera, Oct. 11: With prano Dominique Micheli in the title role, Nicholas Micheli's early music ensemble the season with an concert staging an opera.

5. "Italian Girl," San Francisco Opera, Sept. 10: In a leading lady in the Rossini's bel canto Russian mezzo-soprano sublime vocal skills and plenty of star power.

6. Yo-Yo Ma and the San Francisco Symphony's opening night ways a stellar high-

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Friday Auto Plus

cars.com

Advertising supplement to The Montclarion, The Piedmonter, The Berkeley Voice, The Journal, The Alameda Journal

Friday, December 30, 2005

Section D

Excitement is a byproduct of the 2006 Porsche Cayman S

BY TOM KEANE

MOTOR MATTERS

There's only one word to describe my reaction after driving the 2006 Porsche Cayman S through a motorsport park: Exhilaration. I'll explain the reason in a moment.

The Cayman S is a two-passenger, two-seat mid-engine sports car with heritage dating back to the 1953 Porsche 550 Coupe. That car gained recognition for its victory on the famed Nurburgring race course in Germany — on a rainy day.

Then, Porsche has developed other mid-engine sports cars with winning ways on racecourses throughout the world.

The Cayman S has a 3.4-liter horizontally opposed six-cylinder boxer engine producing 295 horsepower. Because it's a lightweight car, it is capable of doing 0-100 in just 5.1 seconds. It can also reach a top speed of 171 mph and do a quarter-mile sprint in only 13.6 seconds.

It's more than a racecar. It's a car with storage in front and rear compartments. Two sets of golf clubs could be stored in the rear with luggage carried in the front storage compartment. The engine is in front of the rear axle, under a front storage compartment.

Even though it has a solid sports suspension system, it is not a rough-riding car. I drove quite a distance over hilly roads en route to Barber Motorsport Park near Birmingham, Ala. Because the car is so well balanced, it was a pleasure to encounter a bend in the road. I got the unusual feeling that the Cayman S was a part of the road, and I was a part of the vehicle due to the manner in which it responded to every impulse. I was impressed by the solid, stable ride of the car.

With the engine right behind the seats, the passenger and I could hear every acceleration, and this sound became part of the enjoyment of the drive. In spite of the engine's exhaust noise, we took a moment to check out the Bose sound system and we both agreed it is worth \$650 as an option.

There were a few other options tucked into the \$58,900 base price. Our tester



MOTOR MATTERS

THE CAYMAN S is a two-passenger, two-seat mid-engine sports car with heritage dating back to the 1953 Porsche 550 Coupe.

KEANE ON WHEELS

had adaptive leather sports seats that were heated, plus 19-inch Carrera S Wheels, bringing the total to \$63,625.

The engine's power is linked to a six-speed manual transmission with very short and precise shifts. I enjoyed the ease of shifting, but for those who prefer an automatic, the Triptonic S is available as an option.

I've driven numerous racecourses — including Nurburgring — and consider the Barber Motorsport Park as the finest in this country. It's not a circular track, but one with numerous turns and hills, allowing a driver to give a vehicle a good workout, and that's exactly what I did in two ways.

A slalom course laid out with cones was my first challenge. I sat as a passenger while a driving instructor drove

PORSCHE CAYMAN S

Vehicle Type	Two-passenger, rear-wheel drive, compact sports car
Suggested Retail	\$58,900
Price As Tested	\$63,625
Engine Type	2.4-valve horizontally opposed boxer 6-cylinder w/SMPFI
Horsepower	295 @ 6,250 rpm
Torque	251 @ 4,400 rpm
Transmission	Six-speed manual
Wheelbase	95 inches
Height	51 inches
Curb Weight	2,954 pounds
Fuel Capacity	19 gallons
Mileage	City/highway 20/28

me around the course at slow speed, then at full speed. We switched seats and I did five laps — all in second gear — allowing me to obtain maximum acceleration, braking hard just prior to a very sharp turn, then back up to top speed.

Next came the challenging road course. Again, around the track under the guidance of an instructor, then it was my turn. Shifting was between fourth to fifth gears. The balance of this car is so precise, I couldn't get enough of it because I knew

exactly what the car was going to do.

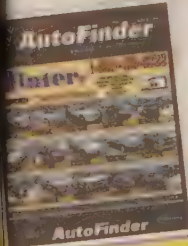
After a half dozen laps, I got out of the vehicle with the thought that I was walking away from a close friend. When asked, "What did you think?" all I could say was, "It was exhilarating." And that's exactly what the Cayman S is — an exhilarating sports car.

INSIDE

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1931 Model A Ford wooden station wagon saved from barn

BY VERN PARKER
MOTOR MATTERS

Henry Ford ended production of the Model T in late May 1927. Retooling for the Model A took about five months. The handsome new Model A Fords were introduced to the motoring public in December 1927 as 1928 models. During the next four years, 5 million Model A Fords were manufactured.

It wasn't until the second year of production that a wooden-bodied station wagon was offered for \$695. Sales were less than spectacular, so the same vehicle in 1930 was priced at \$650.

In 1931 a total of 3,018 station wagons were sold, each one with a base price of \$625. The Saukcloud family of Boston purchased a 1931 Model A station wagon and they took it to their summer home in Petersham, Mass.

When autumn arrived they would return to Boston, leaving the car in Petersham. The annual summer trips began to decline during World War II and ended in 1945. The then 14-year-old Ford had sat in a barn for 13 years. It had been driven only 25,000 summer miles.

Year-round Petersham resident Rod Amidon tried unsuccessfully to buy the old car several times during the 1950s. His 1961 plea was successful and he purchased the 30-year-old Ford for \$25.

Jeff Amidon, son of the new owner, says, "The tires were shot and rats had gotten in the seats. It was towed to my grandfather's barn."

Later that year the barn burned. Young Amidon hooked a chain onto the old Ford and pulled it to safety with his grandfather's John Deere tractor. Now he had an interest in the old car. He sanded the maple posts and birch panels of the body and bleached the necessary parts before applying varnish.

The teenager changed the oil and filled the gasoline tank before he started towing

CLASSIC CLASSICS

the car with the tractor. "I towed it around the field twice before it backfired and then started," he recalls.

Two weeks before high school graduation in 1962, Amidon got the station wagon running well enough to drive to school.

Amidon left for college, then the Army, and the car went up on blocks with a good dose of antifreeze. While he was away his father sold the car to an antique dealer in Connecticut with the right of first refusal if he ever wanted to sell.

Amidon, now a resident of Lufkin, Texas, got the telephone call in 1978. The Connecticut dealer wanted to sell the car and was honoring Amidon's father's right of refusal request. Besides paying the dealer, Amidon had to agree to pay \$500 to his brother Gordon in Vermont and \$500 to his sister Glenade in Massachusetts, as well as \$1,000 to his mother.

Mayflower Van Lines trucked the Ford to Texas in December 1978. Then Amidon went to work. He redid all seven side curtains, which usually are stored in a curtain box under the car. He refinished the bass wood slats supporting the roof, as well as the rock maple header board. Next came a new roof and new black vinyl upholstery for the three rows of seats.

Somewhere along the line, the valves were ground in the 200-cubic-inch, four-cylinder engine. The black fenders are the originals, as is the rubber floor mat from the middle row of seats to the tailgate. The metal running boards are stamped with the original diamond tread pattern.

Besides the fenders, the only exterior parts of the car that are painted are forward of the windshield, in Manila brown paint. The Ford rolls on 4.50x19-inch black spoke wheels supporting a 103.5-inch wheelbase.



IN 1931 A TOTAL OF 3,018 Model A Ford station wagons were sold, each one with a base price of \$625.

Amidon is proud to show the original tool bag with all the original wrenches. The original jack is under the front seat.

The old station wagon has mechanical brakes, which Amidon says, "I can't ever get all four to pull together." He says it's best to double clutch when shifting

the floor-mounted shifter.

The odometer has now recorded 45,000 miles and Amidon reports that the wooden body has been refinished a few times over the years.

"It's a neat car to drive," he says, especially with the four grandchildren as

passengers

For your car to become the classic Classic Classics column, send (frontal 3/4 view) plus brief description, phone number to Vern Parker, 2200 Botolph Drive, Vienna, VA 22181. Photos of good quality will be considered.

Trouble flow chart can an locate interior light problem

BY JUNIOR DAMATO
MOTOR MATTERS

Dear Doctor: I own a 1992 Buick LaSabre with only 50,000 miles. Recently I noticed the interior lights stay on. I looked for door pin switches and could not find any. Any suggestions? — Samuel

Dear Samuel: Some cars have the door switches in the actual door latch assembly. Follow a trouble flow chart to pinpoint the problem. If you'd like more information on trouble shooting the system, go to www.alldata.com, then click on the DIY section. For \$25 you can get a yearly subscription and there is more information than you could ever want.

Dear Doctor: I own a 2002 Chevy

pickup with the 4.8-liter V8 engine and automatic transmission. I noticed a drain plug on the transmission. I would like to drain it and use synthetic transmission fluid. What do you think? — Tom

Dear Tom: Don't use full synthetic transmission fluid, use the factory recommended GM fluid only. Be careful when removing the transmission drain plug, as the head is very thin and weak. In some cases we have to use a hammer action air chisel to loosen this plug, then replace it with a new drain plug. The reason for staying with regular petroleum transmission fluid is the transmission requires a certain amount of friction for the clutch packs to apply.

Dear Doctor: I own a 2003 BMW 3 Series with M style alloy wheels. Keeping the wheels clean was a full-time job, until I installed a set of dust shields on the brakes. These work great, but some people say the brakes will not cool because of the dust shields. I do not road race or abuse the car. I was also told to switch the air in my tires to nitrogen. This seems costly and inconvenient. — Bill

Dear Bill: Dust shields have been around for a long time and they do work. Some brands actually have small vents to allow for airflow. To date I have never heard of any overheating brake problems with the use of them in normal driving. As for the talk of nitrogen vs. air, it is true that ni-

trogen will not cause corrosion build-up on the inside of the rims and attract moisture. Nitrogen is also not supposed to leak through the rubber as air does. Nitrogen has been used for years in commercial aviation tires. But until nitrogen is more widely available and cheaper, I would stay with conventional air.

Dear Doctor: I own a 2001 Chevrolet Venture minivan and have had ongoing problems with the windshield wipers. Initially the wipers would stop in the up position. After the motor replacement the wipers made noise. Another mechanic replaced the wiper motor again, along with what he called a retractor. All was good until a storm when the wiper blades hit

each other and the left side wiper arm was working. I went to the dealership and only tightened the wiper arm. The wipers are shutting off in the up position. — Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth: The most common problem with late model GM vehicles is parking position is the stop assembly park position. Go back to the dealer to let them make the complete repair. I also suggest a small adjustment on the wiper pivot stud.

Dear Doctor: I own a 1986 Cougar 3.8-liter V6 with 92,000 miles. Recently the engine lost the test and

See DOCTOR Page D2

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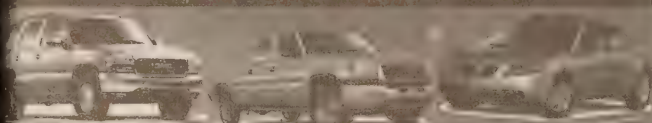
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The Toyota FJ Cruiser combines heritage with technology

BY DAVE VAN SICKLE
MOTOR MATTERS

The 2007 Toyota FJ Cruiser was designed as a concept vehicle that was first seen at the 2003 auto show in Detroit. Public and media reaction was so positive that production planning began immediately and the final design doesn't stray too far from the original concept.

The FJ Cruiser brings forward

DOWN THE ROAD

many design cues from the original FJ 40, such as a wide grille, round headlights, upright windshield, wrapping rear corner windows and a white cap roof. Production of the FJ 40 ended in 1983 to be replaced with larger, more expensive SUVs that even-

tually evolved into the current Land Cruiser.

"The FJ Cruiser effectively fills a gap in the Toyota lineup — capable, affordable, and durable vehicles that are youthful, fun-to-drive, aggressive and tough," said Don Esmond, senior vice president of automotive operations. "The FJ Cruiser will deliver true off-road ruggedness, image and performance at a very low price,

making it highly accessible for a large number of young buyers."

Utility features include a two-part rear hatch with flip-up glass, black over fenders with mudguards and a skid plate. The rear-hinged rear access doors are a unique feature in the SUV segment. They open nearly 90 degrees to provide easy access for rear seat passengers. And in case you have visions of the so-called "suicide doors" of the 1930s, the front door has to be opened first before the rear door can be unlatched. Unlike many imported vehicles, the rear cargo door is hinged on the left side for easy curbside access.

The new FJ rides on a fully boxed frame that is a modified version from the Land Cruiser Prado model sold overseas. The suspension offers double A-arms with long-stroke coil-over shocks in the front. The rear suspension is a 4-link design with a solid axle and Panhard rod. Standard towing capacity is 5,000 pounds with a tongue hitch weight of 500 pounds.

The engine is the well-known 4.0-liter V6 that is shared with the Tacoma, Tundra and 4Runner. With its variable valve timing, this

DOHC engine produces 239 horsepower and 278 pounds-foot of torque on premium gasoline. Preliminary fuel economy estimates are 15/18 miles per gallon city/highway in the 2-wheel drive model and 16/19 mpg city/highway in the 4-wheel drive version.

The five-speed automatic transmission has artificial intelligence that can determine shift patterns based on driving conditions. Automatic transmission models have a shift-on-the-fly, part-time 4-wheel drive system. The six-speed manual transmission is shared with Tacoma, where fifth is direct and sixth is overdrive for improved fuel economy. Manual transmission models have a full-time, 4-wheel drive system with a Torsen limited-slip center differential that provides 40/60 percent front/rear torque split in normal driving. When the front wheels begin to slip, up to 70 percent of the torque can be sent to the rear wheels. If the rear wheels slip, up to 53 percent of the torque is directed to the front.

A clutch-start cancel switch on the dash allows the vehicle to be started without depressing the clutch pedal. This is a feature that allows serious off-roaders to restart the engine without rolling

backwards if the engine stalls on a hill. A dash-mounted indicator to show if the differential is an optional locking differential. It can only be engaged under 5 mph and automatically disengages at 30 mph. The drive models have an optional limited-slip differential that is activated from the dashboard.

Disc brakes are standard on the rear, and safety systems include ABS, electronic brake distribution, brake assist, stability control and traction control. Standard wheels are 16-inch black steel with 205/65R16 tires that are 32 inches in diameter. Six-spoke alloy wheels are available.

If you're wondering about the "FJ Cruiser" name, it was because FJ is the internal name for the Land Cruiser hard-core off-road enthusiasts refer to their vehicles that way. "Cruiser" part of the name is natural because it is so fitting to the Land Cruiser heritage.

In a scant two years, the Cruiser moved from a concept to a production vehicle. The launch in 2006 as a 2007 model. There's no official word yet, but expect a well-timed FJ to be in the mid-20s.



THE 2007 TOYOTA FJ CRUISER is a capable, affordable and durable vehicle that is youthful, fun-to-drive, aggressive and tough.



THE NEWLY DESIGNED 2007 Chevrolet Aveo sedan reaffirms Aveo's exceptional value by delivering one of the most well-equipped and fuel-efficient vehicles in the segment.

SPARE PARTS

Aveo's new look: The newly designed 2007 Chevrolet Aveo sedan, which hits showrooms in the third quarter of 2006, represents the North American debut of Chevy's global face, and is part of Chevy's strategy to grow sales across the globe. The Aveo sedan will be available in two models: LS and LT. It boasts an all-new exterior and interior design characterized by youthful refinement, generous features usually seen in more expensive cars and a more confident, dynamic driving experience. The '07 model reaffirms Aveo's exceptional value by delivering one of the most well-equipped and fuel-efficient vehicles in the segment.

Expansion not extinction:

Judging from the bad news in recent months, it would seem that auto manufacturing in the U.S. was headed for extinction. But the North American auto business is expected to grow. "There are 64 million people in the U.S. who will be getting drivers' licenses in the next 10 years," said George Peterson, president of AutoPacific market research. The appetite for new cars

and trucks will grow to about 18.5 million vehicles per year in the next decade. Source: NADA.

Benz bows to BMW: Mercedes-Benz is set to lose the title of world's best-selling premium brand to BMW. In the first 11 months of 2005, Mercedes-Benz has sold 961,600 vehicles worldwide, compared with 1,020,156 for BMW, according to the companies.

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Doctor

PAGE D2

When started. I replaced the MAP sensor, throttle position sensor and idle air control valve and had a complete tune-up. The engine also runs and hesitates in cold starts. There are no trouble codes and a Ford technician said it might be the computer. — Frank

Dear Frank: Older vehicles sometimes do not set off a computer code unless there is a sensor failure. A coolant sensor or air change temperature sensor could be out of range, which could build up in the throttle body could be culprits. To properly test the system, the computer needs to be reset. A scan tool will be needed to check what the computer is seeing and what it is sending out. **Dear Doctor:** I just purchased a 2006 Hyundai Santa Fe. The owner's manual recommends the oil and filter be changed every six months or 5,000 miles. This seems to be a long time. What are your

thoughts? — John
Dear John: This question is asked frequently. I still like the idea of three months, 3,000 miles with regular petroleum-based oil.

Dear Doctor: I am the original owner of a 2000 Nissan Xterra with 23,000 miles. The ABS light came on and stayed on. Is there anything a backyard mechanic like me can do? — David

Dear David: On some vehicles when the brake fluid drops down to the minimal level, it can set either the ABS or brake warning light on the dash. The only thing you can check is the brake fluid level. A scan tool will be needed to check the computer for trouble fault codes. If the ABS light comes on and stays on when started before the vehicle is moved, this is considered a failure in the ABS system or an open or shorted wire or sensor. If the ABS light comes on after the vehicle is moving, the problem is usually a wheel speed sensor or tone ring.

Send questions to: Auto Doctor, 3 Court Circle, Lakeville, MA 02347.

According to the National Highway Transportation Administration, 25 percent of all cars on the road today have at least one tire whose air pressure is more than eight pounds under factory specification. Underinflated tires can overheat, and are a serious safety hazard. Check the air pressure in your tires at least once a month.

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BRAND NEW 2005 DODGE
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SALE PRICE:\$14,991
FACTORY REBATE:\$2000
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A new star is born: The Stratoliner

BY ARV VOSS

MOTOR MATTERS

Star Motorcycles recently introduced a new lineup of cruisers called the "Roadliner," which is available in three models: the base Roadliner, the Roadliner Midnight and the top-of-the-line Roadliner S.

There are distinct differences between "Cruisers," "Tours" and "Cruiser Touring" bikes. Cruiser Touring comes complete with windshields and side or saddlebags (generally the hard-case variety rather than soft leather), but no top trunk. Cruisers are most often the hot rods of the bike world, intended for boulevard cruising and short runs. Touring bikes are the "RVs" of the two-wheeled circuit, focusing more on long-haul travel. Cruiser Touring bikes are the "Roadliners" in terms of engine, style and sound, while offering functional touring attributes, but in a more modest fashion.

Enter the Star Stratoliner Cruiser — the new divisional Cruiser flagship. The Stratoliner shares its basic mechanical makeup with the Roadliner, and also comes in a variety of trim levels that parallel its cruiser stable mate. Stratoliner all come with easily detachable and lockable windshields, detachable covered hard bags, a passenger pillion and detachable backrest.

The base model Stratoliner starts at \$15,180 and is finished in a copper metallic hue with painted wheels, rear fender stays and painted/chrome engine covers; polished hand controls; and brushed stainless forks. The Stratoliner Midnight begins at \$15,480 and sports Raven "black-out" treatment that includes the headlight nacelle, forks, controls and top clamp in addition to the black bodywork and upholstery.

The top-of-the-line Stratoliner is the "S" model with a base sticker of \$18,580. The Stratoliner S is available in two two-tone finishes: Black Cherry/Raven Black and Liquid Silver/Metallic Silver. Both feature loads of extra chrome including the hand controls, forks, shifter, and rear fender stay and engine covers. The 12-spoke wheels are polished. Upholstery is Black on the Silver version, and matching two-tone on the Black Cherry/Raven Black model.

2-WHEELING TODAY

Power is provided by a 113 cubic-inch (1854 cc) air-cooled, pushrod OHV, and 48-degree V-Twin engine with twin-bore fuel injection and throttle position sensor. The motor makes 101 horsepower at the crankshaft (91 horsepower at the rear wheel) and 124 pounds-foot of torque at the crank (yielding 117 pounds-foot to the road). The motor couples to a sequential five-speed manual transmission, with final belt drive. The new aluminum frame weighs only 37 pounds. Additional weight savings come from an eight-component aluminum rear-swing arm. The exhaust setup consists of large chrome, two-into-one right-side setup, with a sweet-sounding, deep-throated tone.

The Stratoliner S tips the scale with a dry weight of 725 pounds, but its low center of gravity and remarkable balance provide a much lighter feel, tempting floorboard-dragging transitions from turn to turn. The ride quality is exceptionally comfortable thanks to 46 mm dual forks with 5.3-inch travel up front and a single-shock Link-Type rear suspension with 4.3-inch travel.

The Stratoliner S travels on Bridgestone radial tires — 130/70-18 in the front and 190/60-17 at the rear. The wheels are polished 12-spoke hollow cast alloy, with 298 mm dual-front discs assisted by a 320 mm single disc at the rear handle stopping chores. An additional passenger comfort zone is provided by a higher adjustable rear suspension pre-load capability than that of the Roadliner. Fuel capacity is 4.5 gallons, with the reserve included.

Summary

The Star Stratoliner press launch took place over the 200-plus mile "Palms to Pines" route out of Palm Springs, Ca., conquering the surrounding mountains and back, showcasing the big, beautiful bike's capabilities.

Acceleration is smooth and instantaneous over a broad torque range, and shifting up or down delivers smooth transitions. Braking is positive and effective as well. The



MOTOR MATTERS

THE STRATOLINER S GENERATES the appearance of a custom bike with a streamlined art nouveau look.

Stratoliner S's road manners are most pleasing due to the bike's incredible stability, which was proven when encountering strong, gusting crosswinds (often in excess of 50 mph) even at high freeway speeds.

The weight mass positioning and low stance allows for both slow and high-speed maneuvers with equal aplomb. Riders long-of-leg may need to move their inside turn leg away from the tank to clear the beach-style bar when executing tight, slow speed exercises.

The Stratoliner S generates the appearance of a custom bike with a streamlined art nouveau look. The directional and running lamps resemble a 1959 Cadillac El Dorado's teardrop-shaped units fore and aft. The trapezoidal brake and taillight features a clear lens with a Red LED lights beneath. Badging is discreet (almost nonexistent), inviting individual personalization with less hassle.

The new Cruising Tourer will no doubt challenge other makes for attention, and will likely capture an increased market share. One thing is for sure, it's no pretender — it's the real deal.

Specifications

Base Price: \$16,580.
Price as Tested: \$17,125.
Engine Type and Size: 113 cubic-inch (1854 cc) air-cooled pushrod OHV, 48-degree V-Twin with Mikuni twin-bore fuel injection.
Horsepower: 91
Torque: 117
Transmission: Five-speed manual
Drive Train: Final drive — Belt
Suspension: Front — 46 mm dual forks with 5.3-inch travel. Rear — Single-shock Link-Type with 4.3-inch travel.
Brakes: Front — 298mm dual front discs. Rear — 320mm single disc.
Wheelbase: 67.5 inches
Curb Weight: 725 pounds (dry)
Fuel Capacity: 4.5 gallons
Seat Height: 28.9 inches

Road rage: Ways to keep your anger under control

3N/JJ

While running late to work, a car cuts you off in a crowded intersection. How do you feel? Heated.

It's normal to feel ill-tempered in heavy traffic. When anger provokes you to act out, however, the situation can become dangerous and even deadly.

While you can't control the actions of others, maintaining your composure will help you stay safe on the road. Here are some tips:

■ **Plan ahead.** Before you hit the road, listen to traffic reports to see which routes are congested. You'll then be able to take an alternate route or mentally prepare yourself for a slower drive. If possible, leave for your destination early to beat

rush-hour traffic delays.

■ **Breathe.** If you start to feel angry, focus on breathing deeply or try other relaxation techniques. To calm your nerves, play your favorite CD or bring along an audio book to help pass the time.

■ **Leave the house stress-free.** Thinking about all the tasks you have to perform for the day, you may feel wound up before even setting foot in the car. To relieve this mental strain, try a stress-fighting supplement such as Stress & Tension, part of the "Spray" line of sublingual sprays, to help you relax and avoid rage.

The Stress & Tension spray was developed by doctors to help your body adapt and recover quickly from everyday stress. This product can be

used before or after a stressful situation and meets all Food and Drug Administration guidelines for good manufacturing practices. For more information, call 866-412-7827 or visit www.thespray.com.

■ **Retain your compassion.** Since you don't know the circumstances behind other drivers' actions, do not be quick to judge someone else's poor driving as an act of aggression against you. For example, someone who cuts you off in traffic might be lost, confused or distracted by another driver.

■ **Pull over.** If you're feeling angry, get off at the nearest exit to compose yourself. Remember that safety comes first and that arriving late to your destination is a better alternative to risking someone's life or your own.

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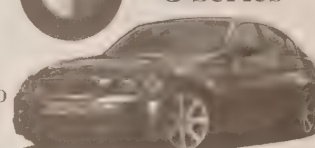
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Vehicle restoration do's and don'ts

HAGERTY INSURANCE
TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Before taking your valuable collector car to a professional restorer, Hagerty Insurance has some simple tips that could make the restoration experience enjoyable and stress-free.
 "A quality restoration is the product of a good, solid relationship based on mutual understanding and fueled by common interest," says McKeel Hagerty, CEO of Hagerty Insurance. "A good restorer knows the passion owners have for their classic and should alleviate any concerns" throughout the entire restoration."

Restoration do's

- Always outline in writing: work to be performed, who will supply the parts, timeline for completion and payment policy.
- Pay restoration invoices on time, but also double check that parts are delivered promptly and are correct before signing off or paying for them.
- Determine responsibilities and

expectations in advance. Many restorations shops have contracts that will detail what work will be performed and at what rate.
 ■ Give the shop advance notice if you plan on visiting your vehicle. Only plan on bi-weekly or monthly visits at most.
 ■ Save all correspondence and invoices between you and the restoration facility. Document any problems, concerns or discrepancies.

Restoration don'ts

- Don't leave your car with someone at a restoration shop that you have not researched and know their reputation. Don't hesitate to ask for references if you are not comfortable.
- Don't call the restoration shop more than once a week to prevent slowing the process and becoming a nuisance.
- Don't mistake your estimate for the exact cost of the project; unforeseen damage or changing requirements will increase the cost, so be prepared to pay for additional

work.
 ■ Don't expect your restoration to happen over night. It is a restoration and will take time — be patient.
 ■ Don't just restore surface bodywork; the structure must be taken care of as well, because rot and rust will eventually become a problem.

"The Restoration Survival Guide: Preserving and Restoring Your Collector Car," by collector car consultant and author Jed Rapoport, is a 73-page primer for both novice and enthusiast that covers everything from types of restorations, to outlining questions when interviewing shop owners, to the details of the contract process. "The Restoration Survival Guide" is available at <http://shop.hagerty.com>.

Hagerty is a leading insurance agency for collector vehicles and boats. The company works proactively on hobby legislation and supports the Collectors Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation of the hobby.
 For more information, call 800-922-4050 or visit www.hagerty.com.

The ABCs of CPOs: A used car buyers' guide to certified pre-owned

ARA
 If you're shopping for a used car you've probably heard the word "certified." The number of certified used cars has grown since their introduction approximately 10 years ago. Unfortunately, most of us don't know what certified should mean and, even worse, it doesn't always mean the same thing.

While all certification programs are different, the basic idea behind them is simple. A manufacturer or dealer puts vehicles that qualify through a fairly rigorous and thorough inspection process, add things like extended warranties, maybe offer special financing terms and other perks and sell them with many of the same benefits associated with buying a new car.

Buying certified is a smart move for many used car buyers. You get lots of features you might only get

with a new car. Better still, you can get more car for your money — certified vehicles cost less than their new car counterparts.

But all certification programs are not created equal. To help you sort out the best from the worthless, used car experts offer the following advice.

Certified by whom? Make sure you know who sets the standards for the certification program and who makes certain they're being enforced. Look for a manufacturer backed program — the best people to certify a car are the ones who built it. Unscrupulous sellers often claim a car is certified but the certification isn't worth the paper on which it is printed.

Do your homework. You still have to pick the right car for you. Research the makes and models that make sense for your driving needs — long commutes, taking kids to soccer, teenager's first car.

Check safety and reliability. Published online and printed in your whole area.

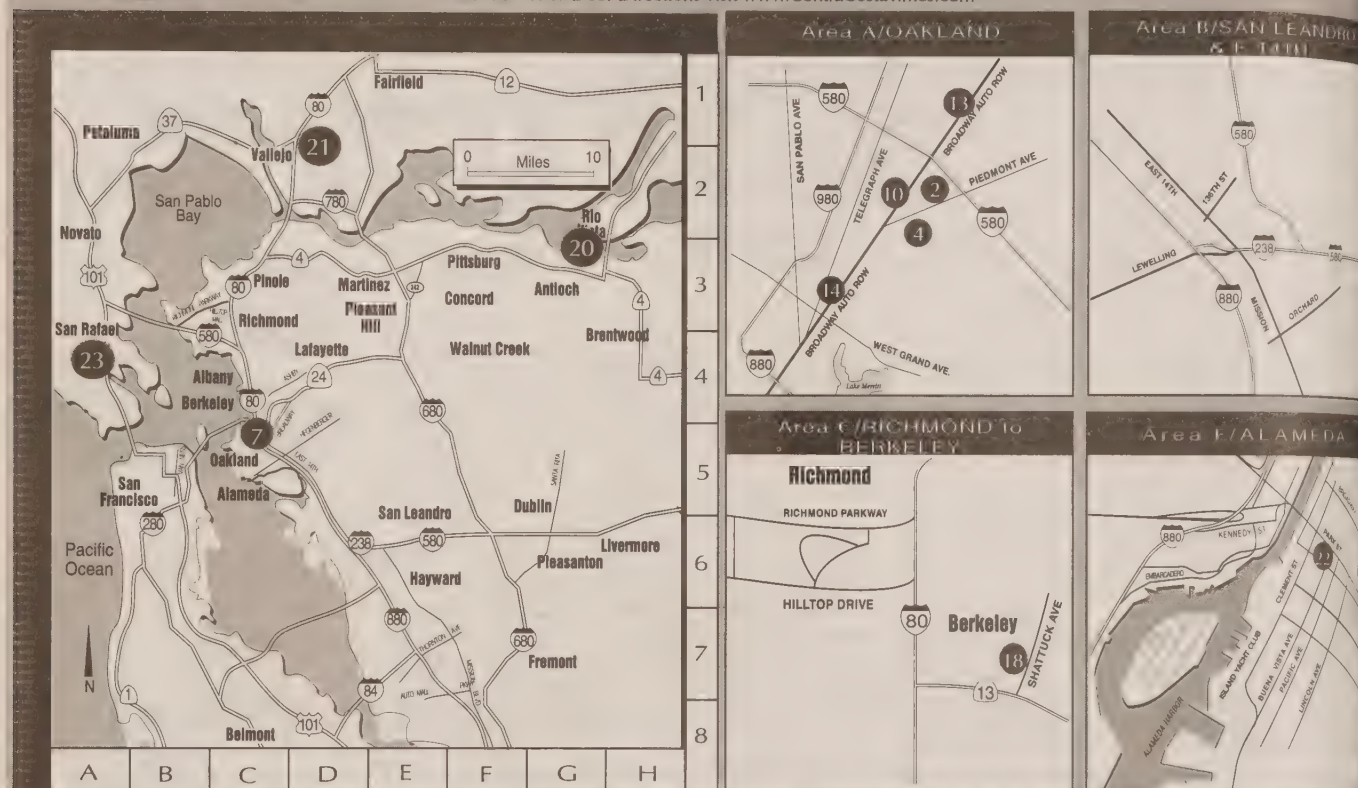
How was the car certified? A minimum a car should have a detailed mechanical inspection and a CARFAX vehicle history report. Ask to see the results. The car may be certified, but you're the one who's going to drive it.

What does it get you? A certified used car you're buying usually comes with an extended warranty. Make sure you know what this covers and for how long. You can always add additional coverage through an extended warranty for a little more money.

Ask for more. Don't forget you're the one buying the car. You want roadside assistance, changes or anything else you're afraid to ask. You can ask for anything before you buy.

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